

Care of your dog following fracture repair

The following medications have been dispensed. Please ensure **all doses** are given. If you are having difficulty dosing medications or your pet develops diarrhoea or vomiting, please seek **immediate** veterinary advice.

Medication:

Key Points for Aftercare:

The operation site will have been clipped (other sites may also have been clipped for administering drugs and fluids etc). Avoid your dog interfering with the surgical (and other clipped) site/s. Most wounds will be covered with a light adhesive dressing, and this often works loose or can be removed, after three to five days. Some dogs need to wear an Elizabethan protective collar to prevent attention to stitches or dressings. If necessary, this should stay in place until the stitches are removed. Your dog mustn't be **allowed** to lick the surgical wound, as this may introduce infection.

Some swelling of the operated limb following surgery is normal (especially fluid accumulation around the hock). **Ice packs** for 10 to 15 minutes every 2 to four hours (if possible) **are recommended** in the first few days following surgery to reduce swelling and improve comfort.

Regular, gentle massage (sweeping motions from ankle to hip) may help dissipate oedema fluid. Range-of-motion exercises on the operated limb may be performed several times daily, but **ONLY** if tolerated. Exercise each major joint of the limb e.g. hock (ankle), knee, hip with "bicycle" movements.

If the surgical site is causing excessive irritation, is **discharging** or if you are concerned **swelling** is excessive, please contact your vet.

Laminate or slippery surfaces should be avoided or covered temporarily; a slip could result in serious injury. Stairs should be avoided. For smaller dogs it may be preferable to carry them outside for toileting.

Visitors should be instructed not to encourage excitement during visits. Children in the house should be informed of the temporary restrictions and the importance of following these.

Confinement and permitted activity:

Confine appropriately to **eliminate running and jumping** for 8 weeks. Choose appropriate confinement to achieve this for your dog; cage confinement is advised. Short **leash** walks in the garden (a few minutes four to six times daily) are recommended to allow toileting. Keep your dog at your side; use a lead of no more than 1-metre length.

- Three weeks following surgery: commence lead walking for 5 minutes at a time, two to three times daily.
- Four weeks following surgery: increase lead walking to 7 - 9 minutes at a time, two to three times daily.
- Five weeks following surgery: increase lead walking to 10 minutes at a time, two to three times daily.
- Six weeks following surgery: increase lead walking to 12 - 15 minutes at a time, two to three times daily.

Always use a short lead when walking and **maintain confinement at all other times**; running, jumping and play must be avoided for at least 8 weeks.

Re-examinations with your vet:

- **Morning** after surgery if your dog was discharged the same day as surgery
- **3 days** following surgery: post-surgery check-up
- **7- 10 days** after surgery: check on wound healing (+/- suture/staple removal, if present).
- **Weekly check-ups** thereafter may be recommended by your Vet.
- _____ **weeks** following surgery: X-rays will typically be taken so please bring your dog in fasted

Gradual improvement should be expected following surgery. If deterioration occurs, please contact your vet immediately.

Variation from these aftercare instructions may increase the risk of post-surgical complications or otherwise affect outcome; only make variations if **specifically advised** to do so by your vet.

Rehabilitation beyond 6 weeks:

Weeks 7 – 16: assuming satisfactory follow-up radiographs, and only after your Vet confirms it is ok to do so, commence the rehabilitation program below.

- Lead activity may gradually increase; commence 15 to 20-minute lead walks three to four times daily increasing the duration of each walk by approximately five minutes weekly; adjust as necessary according to patient response. Walking in uncut grass (ideally, elbow to shoulder height) will encourage increased flexion of all joints (higher limb lift) promoting the strengthening of flexor (hamstring) muscles. Incline walking e.g. gentle hills will aid extensor (thigh) muscle strengthening.
- Water treadmill hydrotherapy is beneficial to recovery; ideally twice weekly, for at least 10 sessions.
- If anti-inflammatories are still being used begin to gradually reduce the dose. If no deterioration is evident as the dose is lowered continue to gradually reduce and stop dosing within several weeks.
- A gradual return to off-lead exercise may commence between 2- and 3 months post-surgery provided there is no discernible lameness and hindlimb muscle mass is relatively symmetrical between the two limbs. Allow 5 minutes off-lead towards the end of an afternoon/evening walk. If well-tolerated, increase the duration by 3 to 5 minutes each week.
- Unrestricted stair access and rough play with other dogs should be prevented for a minimum of 3 months following surgery.