

Care of your Dog following tarsal arthrodesis

Patients name:

Primary-care veterinary surgeon:

The following medications have been dispensed for your dog. Please ensure **all doses** are given. If you are having difficulty administering medications or your dog develops diarrhoea or vomiting please contact your veterinarian **immediately**.

Medication:	Dosage:	When to start:
Antibiotic:.....	Give	daily fordays
NSAID:	Give	daily fordays
Opioid:	Give	daily fordays
Other:	Give	daily fordays

Key Points for Aftercare:

The operation sites will have been clipped (other sites may also have been clipped for administering drugs and fluids etc). Avoid your pet interfering with the surgical (and other clipped) site/s. It is particularly important your pet **not be allowed** to lick the surgical wound, as this may introduce infection. An Elizabethan protective collar is **strongly advised** to prevent licking or self-trauma (or unwanted attention to the bandages, where present). The Elizabethan collar should stay in place for 14 days post surgery.

Your dog should be kept confined to restrict activity (ideally to a large cage, or alternatively a single room **devoid of furniture** with non-slip flooring). Running and particularly **jumping** must be avoided at all times. Short **leash** walks in the garden (several minutes four to six times daily) are recommended to allow toileting. Confinement should be maintained **at all other times** until your Vet has specifically indicated that confinement may cease.

It is important to try to reduce swelling of the operated limb following surgery with regular cold treatment (flexible sports ice packs are ideal). Apply **Ice packs** for 10 to 15 minutes as frequently as possible (within the first 24 hours 2 to 3 hour intervals is ideal) for 3 to 4 days following surgery to reduce swelling and improve comfort. Regular, gentle massage (sweeping motions from ankle to hip) may help dissipate oedema fluid.

If the surgical site is causing excessive irritation, is discharging or if you are concerned swelling is excessive please seek veterinary advice.

After seven days, commence gentle range-of-motion exercises, but **ONLY** if tolerated. Perform flexion and extension of the tarsus (ankle) several times daily; only flex/extend as far as is reasonably comfortable. Also exercise the other major joints of the limb (knee & hip).

Care of Bandages (where present)

A bandage is sometimes applied to the operated limb following surgery. It is important the dressings are well cared for to minimise the risk of any problems. If the dressing slips or becomes wet or soiled, it may not perform its functions properly which could lead to complications.

Squeeze the digits of your dog's paw (toes) morning and evening to check for normal sensation. If your dog is not responding normally contact your Vet immediately.

Check the dressing at least twice daily, especially the top and bottom. Contact your veterinary surgeon promptly if you have any concerns.

Re-examinations with Your Vet:

- **2 days** following discharge: post-surgery check-up, bandage change (when present)
- **4 days** following discharge: bandage removal (if present).
- **10 - 14 days** following surgery: suture removal.
- **4 weeks** following surgery: check-up
- **6 - 8 weeks** following surgery: check-up & X-rays. Please bring your dog in fasted
- **12 - 14 weeks** following surgery: check-up & X-rays. Please bring your dog in fasted
- Additional visits as indicated by your Vet

Please note that additional fees will typically be incurred at re-examinations. Please ask your vet about relevant fees.

Gradual improvement should be expected following surgery. If deterioration occurs please seek veterinary advice.

Declaration:

I confirm receipt of this aftercare handout (2 pages). I understand that variation from the instructions contained herein may increase the risk of post-surgical complications or otherwise affect outcome; I should only make variations if **specifically advised** to do so by my vet.

Owner's signature:

Veterinarian's Signature:

Print Name:

Print Name:

Date:

Date: