

Fractures of the lateral &/or medial Malleoli

Your dog has suffered a fracture of one or both malleoli. The lateral malleolus is actually the bottom end of the fibula. The medial malleolus is the bottom end of the tibia (shin bone). The collateral ligaments originate on the malleoli; fracture therefore leads to pronounced joint instability. Luxation (dislocation) of the tarsal (hock or ankle) joint is often associated with malleolar fractures; this can result in damage to the articular cartilage of the joint surfaces. Occasional damage may be so severe that fusion of the joint is necessary.

Fractures of the malleoli are typically repaired with Kirschner-wires in combination with tension-band wires, or lag screws if the fragments are large enough.

Bandages, splints or casts may be applied after surgery to protect the repair/s. Strict confinement is necessary to minimise the possibility of complications.

Fortunately the majority of dogs with malleolar fracture/s recover well and are able to return to normal activities with good long-term joint function.

As with any surgery complications may arise and are detailed below, although serious complications are uncommon.

- Even though very uncommon, anaesthetic death can occur. With the use of modern anaesthetic protocols and careful monitoring the risk of problems with anaesthesia is minimised, but never eliminated.
- Infection is an uncommon complication as strict sterile technique is used during the surgery and antibiotics are administered during and after the procedure. Should infection occur, early detection and treatment generally results in rapid resolution, although very occasionally removal of the implants may be required once the bone has healed. More serious problems may occur if infection progresses untreated or if your dog suffers infection with a multiple resistance bacteria e.g. MRSA. If you suspect an infection contact your VET immediately.
- Excessive early activity will reduce the likelihood of the bone healing and will increase the risk of implant failure or loosening. Loose or migrating implants may need to be removed or replaced.
- Excessive activity will also substantially increase the likelihood of bandage or splint associated complications. Over activity causes excessive movement of the dressings against the skin which can result in "rub" or "pressure" sores. Additionally if the dressings slip they can become constrictive cutting off blood supply. If you suspect the bandages have slipped you should contact your Vet immediately.
- Even after the bone has healed it is still important to have a controlled, gradual increase in activity, similar to human patients undergoing rehabilitation following surgery. If activity is increased too quickly after surgery straining of joint structures may occur. Rest and anti-inflammatory medications typically resolve these problems.
- As malleolar fractures involve the joint the development of some degree of osteoarthritis is inevitable, and may occasionally become debilitating. Fortunately the majority of patients recover very good joint function despite some degree of osteoarthritis.

AFTERCARE OF YOUR DOG FOLLOWING SURGERY:

Your dog should be kept confined (ideally to a large cage or alternatively a single room with **non-slip** flooring) to restrict activity. Short **leash** walks in the garden (a few minutes four to six times daily) are recommended to allow toileting. Confinement should be maintained at all times for first six weeks following surgery, with the exception of scheduled rehabilitation as detailed below.

The bandage +/- splint will need to be changed at least every five to seven days. If a cast has been applied it will still need to be checked by your Vet at least once a week.

The bandaging will typically be removed by four weeks following surgery; at this time commence lead walking for 5 minutes at a time, twice daily, but maintain confinement at other times. Lead walking may gradually increase but should not exceed **10 minutes** at a time for the first six weeks following surgery.

Hydrotherapy is beneficial (but not essential) to recovery but should only be performed in a centre with qualified personnel. Hydrotherapy may commence following bandage removal.

DECLARATION:

I have read the information contained herein (2 pages) and am satisfied I have a sufficient understanding of the procedures my dog is scheduled to undergo, including potential complications that may occur and requirements for aftercare following surgery.

I hereby consent for my dog to undergo malleolar fracture repair as scheduled by my Vet.

Owner's signature:

Witness:

Print name:

Print name:

Date:

Date: