

## Exploratory arthrotomy- Meniscectomy

### What is arthrotomy?

Arthrotomy is an incision into a joint. An exploratory arthrotomy involves making an incision into a joint and looking inside assess structures and investigate. To investigate a possible meniscal tear/s, I typically perform a subpatellar mini-arthrotomy; the joint incision is typically between 8 mm and 15 mm, with a skin incision of 1.5 to 3 centimetres. This typically provides an excellent view within the knee, however, a larger incision is occasionally required.

### Outcome and potential risks of surgery

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

- Excessive early activity may damage healing tissues delaying progress or otherwise affecting longer term outcome.
- Some dogs may temporarily deteriorate after surgery before gradually improving. Management of these dogs may include strictly limited activity in addition to pain relieving medications. Additional physiotherapy including ultrasound, laser and shockwave therapy may be beneficial for some cases.
- It is 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. Management is as above.
- Infection is a potential complication after any surgery. The risk will be higher where there are implants e.g. plates, screws, pins near the arthrotomy site. Should infection occur, early detection and treatment generally results in rapid resolution.

### Postoperative care

An adhesive pad may be covering the wound. This can be removed after several days, or immediately if soiled.

Medications e.g., Pain killers will be dispensed.

Ice packs 10 to 15 minutes several times daily may also be helpful in the days following surgery to reduce swelling and improve comfort.

Your dog should be kept confined to **eliminate running and jumping** for the first 4-6 weeks: a small single room (or cordoning off a section of a larger room) with non-slip flooring and no furniture may be sufficient. Short leash walks in the garden (a few minutes four to six times daily) are recommended initially to allow toileting.

- 7 days following surgery commence lead walking for 5 minutes at a time, two to three times daily.
- 10 days following surgery: increase lead walking to 10 minutes at a time, two to three times daily.
- Two weeks following surgery: increase lead walking to 15 minutes at a time, two to three times daily. Hydrotherapy may also commence at this time.
- Three weeks following surgery: increase lead walking to 15-20 minutes at a time, two to three times daily.
- Four weeks following surgery: increase lead walking to 20-30 minutes at a time, two to three times daily.
- Five weeks following surgery: normal activities may be gradually resumed.

### Declaration:

I have read the information contained herein 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 surgery.

Owner's name:

Dog's Name:

Owner's signature:

Date: