



## Post-operative care for patients after fracture fixation surgery

Fractures fixation is variously performed with pins, wires, conventional bone plates, screws, and locking plates, often in combination.

<b>Medication:</b>	<b>Anti-inflammatories:</b> Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, NSAIDs usually start/resume the morning after surgery. These are tablets (eg carprofen, Onsior or Previcox), or liquid (meloxicam), to be given with food. If vomiting or diarrhoea is noted, stop this medication and seek prompt advice. NSAIDs and analgesics are often no longer required after a few days.
	<b>Analgesics:</b> We usually dispense tramadol (tablets given twice daily) for dogs or buprenorphine (liquid given every 8 hours by mouth) for cats.
	<b>Antibiotics:</b> We sometimes dispense antibiotics like claviseptin (tablets given twice daily)

**Wounds** must not be interfered with or bathed. It is the responsibility of the owner to prevent wound interference. Elizabethan collars are used to prevent wound interference for around 2 weeks. Leave these on, especially at night. If your pet can get at the wound around the collar, call us promptly! Any ooze may be gently blotted from the wound with kitchen towel, but if ooze is seen, advice should be sought.

**Rechecks** with us are free of further charge and are recommended at 2-3 weeks and 6-8 weeks post-op, or earlier if there are issues or dressings to change. Please contact us to book appointments. Any appointments at your own vets are very likely to be chargeable. Where travelling is an issue, and/or for anxious/nervous/fractious pets, consider sending a text/email photo/video and phoning us in lieu of travelling. By 3-5 days there will usually be significant weight-bearing on the operated leg. There may be significant bruising evident. There may be significant swelling lower down the leg at this time as inflammation “drops” down the leg. Swelling and bruising should disappear within a few days.

**Dressings** may be used post-operatively to control swelling or to provide extra support. The interval at which dressings are subsequently changed, and the period for which they are needed will vary from case to case. Dressing should be kept dry at all times. If they become wet, or if they slip, or if they seem to be causing irritation please seek advice promptly. This is especially important if there are splints/casts incorporated in the dressing. If you aren't clear on when the next dressing change is required, or when the dressing should be removed, please seek prompt advice. **Please don't attempt to replace dressings yourself**, and only remove dressings under specific advice to do so, and then only if absolutely sure that there is no risk of being bitten etc. An Elizabethan collar should then be used until a vet has advised you to the contrary. Leave any white thin Primapore dressing to fall off on its own. We place absorbable sutures and usually leave these to fall away naturally. At the 2-3 week check, sutures may be removed if there are any issues.

**Strict restriction and supervision of activity** is required. When cats or dogs don't have your UNDIVIDED attention, consider confining them to a cage during the early stages of healing. Cages that fold flat when not in use are widely available from Argos, many DIY stores or from on-line retailers. For cats, several short periods of supervised walking around the kitchen are allowed each day. For dogs, a lead should be used to restrict activity anywhere outside of the house including the garden. Allow just 5 minutes of lead restricted exercise, three times a day, until you are advised to the contrary. For both species, running/jumping/climbing (into cars, upstairs, onto furniture, onto kitchen work tops etc) should be prevented. Consider using stair gates and ramps, and ensure doors and windows are shut to avoid escapes!

**Your pet can eat and drink from the evening after surgery.** Eating, drinking and urination should have been seen on the morning after surgery, and at least once daily thereafter – if not, please call us without delay. Defaecation sometimes isn't seen for several days post-op.

**Physiotherapy and hydrotherapy.** Encouraging gentle walking is helpful – position water/food bowls to encourage them to rise and stretch periodically. Passive flexion / extension exercises help maintain flexibility and joint motion. Hydrotherapy can help maintain the range of joint motion and muscle mass but this is delayed until 3-4 weeks post-operatively when the wound can stand immersion. We ask your own vets to help you arrange hydrotherapy with their preferred providers in your area.

**Follow up X-rays** are typically taken at 6-8 weeks (or earlier in young animals), sometimes under sedation, to confirm bone healing before increased exercise is allowed. Please don't feed your pet beforehand in case we need to sedate. X-rays done at your own vets will be chargeable and will likely require sedation or anaesthesia.

**What does the future hold?** The future is usually bright. If joints were involved in the original fracture, degenerative joint disease, (DJD, often called “arthritis”), may develop in the future. Your own vet will advise you if any action is required. Occasionally we see infection, implant related irritation, implants working loose, or implants can ache in cold weather, any of which usually require implant removal.

**Our fixed prices include follow up consults and x-rays with us, and medication for around 5 days post-operatively, but don't include further medication, revision surgery or implant removal. Consults, dressings, X-rays and drugs from your usual vet will be chargeable. For further details on our fixed prices please see [www.wm-referrals.com](http://www.wm-referrals.com), “about us”, “FAQs”. For further advice please contact us on 07944 105501 or at [enquiries@wm-referrals.com](mailto:enquiries@wm-referrals.com). Consider texting/emailing pictures and short videos**