



Post-operative care for dogs after injection of depomedrone (a steroid medication) into the shoulder joint

Shoulder lameness can be difficult to diagnose because pain responses to manipulation can be hard to elicit. Shoulder injuries can involve sprains of the ligaments that support the joint and inflammation of the biceps tendon (which originates within the shoulder joint). After xrays, and the drawing off of joint fluid for lab analysis, we often try injecting steroid into the joint to see if this makes a difference to lameness. If it helps, it usually does so for a few weeks.

Medication: **Antibiotics:** We don't typically dispense antibiotics for these cases.

Anti-inflammatories: We might have dispensed non-steroidal anti-inflammatories (NSAIDs), but we usually try to avoid giving these in combination with steroids as problems with the gastrointestinal system can result, though this is in fact pretty rare in our experience. If NSAIDs are used they may be tablets (eg carprofen, Onsior or Previcox), or liquid (meloxicam). They should be given with food. If vomiting or diarrhoea is noted, stop this medication and seek prompt advice.

There are no wounds or dressings with this procedure, just a skin clip and a needle puncture.

Rechecks a few days after surgery may be with your own vet to save un-necessary travelling. We could do this check-up if travelling is not an issue. Post-op check-ups with us are free of charge under our "fixed price" schemes. Please contact us to book an appointment for us to see the case back 2-3 weeks post-procedure so we can check that all is going to plan.

Rechecks are recommended at 2-3 weeks and 6-8 weeks post-op. Rechecks at 3-5 days are advised if there are issues. Check-ups with us at Lichfield are free of further charge and only take a few minutes. Check ups at your home practice are chargeable. For rechecks at Lichfield, please contact us to book an appointment. For rechecks at your home practice, please ring your own vets to book these. Where travelling is an issue, and/or for pets that get very anxious at the vets, a simple phone conversation with us and/or a text/email photo of the wound may well suffice in lieu of the 3-5 day check. **By a couple of days post-procedure, there should be significant weight-bearing on the operated leg.**

Strict restriction and supervision of activity is not required. However we recommend use of a lead and preventing the dogs from jumping down (eg out of cars, off walls etc). Exercising the dog on soft terrain like grassland will be gentler on the shoulder joint.

Physiotherapy and hydrotherapy

Encouraging walking is helpful. Hydrotherapy can help maintain the range of joint motion and muscle. Ask your own vet for their recommendation for a hydrotherapy centre in your area.

What complications might occur and what does the future hold?

Infection is a possibility but very rare in our experience and we take great care with the asepsis around this procedure.

Improvement is often rapid if there was a shoulder problem underlying the lameness. Improvement often lasts 5-6 weeks. Deterioration may occur in which case repeat injections can be considered.

If signs continue / progress we sometimes consider arthroscopy, but we'd delay this for a few weeks after steroid injection.

Degenerative joint disease (DJD, often called "arthritis") is often present and a separate information sheet at www.wm-referrals.com covers this subject. Your own vet will advise you of what, if any, action is required. However the shoulder is a "forgiving" joint as far as DJD is concerned and DJD may not prove to be an issue for your dog. DJD in joints like the elbow would be much more likely to be a long term issue.

Our fixed prices include any follow up consults and x-rays done with us, but don't include further medication or revision surgery. For further details please see www.wm-referrals.com, "about us", "FAQs". Consults, dressings, x-rays and drugs from your usual vet will be chargeable. For further advice please contact us on 07944 105501 or at mail@wm-referrals.com.