

## Post-operative care after surgery for elbow incongruity with dynamic ulna osteotomy

This surgery is carried out in young dogs that are still growing, often Bassett Hounds and Shi Tzus. Sometimes other surgeries might be required around the same time like straightening the radius if it is bowed. The ulna is cut at an angle. The top piece is then free to be pulled into its "best-fit" position by the pull of the triceps muscle and it will settle into this best-fit position in the weeks after surgery. This maximises the smoothness of motion of the elbow joint. This is important because the elbow joint is notoriously intolerant of any incongruity, and responds with the development of progressive degenerative joint disease which can be very debilitating in this joint. The oblique "fracture" that we create with our bone cut is left to heal with the formation of a callus – a mass of bone – which you will usually be able to see and to feel on the back edge of the upper forearm. This firm swelling is normal and natural way that bone heals. This callus usually reduces over the following months and years. It is of no consequence to your pet, but it worries some owners so we warn you about it in advance to avoid you getting an unexpected surprise!

**Medication:**           **Antibiotics:**           We usually dispense antibiotics like claviseptin (tablets given twice daily).

**Anti-inflammatories:** We usually dispense carprofen (tablets given twice daily), or meloxicam (liquid given once daily). These are given with food. They occasionally cause vomiting or diarrhoea, in which case prompt advice should be sought. Alternative excellent anti-inflammatory drugs that your own vet might use including Onsior and Previcox.

**Analgesics:**           We often dispense tramadol, (tablets given twice daily).

**The wound and dressings** should not be interfered with or bathed. An Elizabethan collar helps prevent wound interference. We usually cover the wound with a thin white Primapore dressing, secured with a spray glue. Primapores fall off in anything from a few days to a couple of weeks. Without the spray glue, it is very unlikely that you will be able to get a replacement Primapore to stick so please leave ours in place as long as possible! A few drops of dried discharge may be evident on the Primapore, but if there is any on-going discharge please gently blot it with kitchen towel and seek advice promptly. More substantial dressings are occasionally used for a few days over the basic Primapore to reduce swelling. If used, these should be kept dry at all times. If they become wet or slip then they can be removed, leaving the thin white Primapore layer in place as long as it will stay on to give some on-going protection.

**Strict lead restriction** is required in the early stages of healing, anywhere outside of the house including the garden. Running/jumping/climbing (into cars, upstairs, onto furniture) should all be prevented. Consider using stair gates and ramps. However several short periods of gentle lead restricted walking exercise per day are welcomed.

### Immediately post op

Your pet can be allowed to eat and drink on the evening after surgery. Eating, drinking and urination should have been seen on the morning after surgery – if not, please call us without delay. Please note that there is sometimes no defaecation for several days.

**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, and all post-op check-ups are free of charge with us under our "fixed price" schemes. Please contact us to book an appointment for us to see the case back 2-3 weeks post-operatively when we can remove sutures/staples and check that all is going to plan.

### Physiotherapy and hydrotherapy

Encouraging gentle walking is helpful – putting water/food bowls on the other side of the room from your pet's bed can encourage them to rise and stretch periodically. Passive flexion / extension exercises help maintain flexibility and joint motion. Hydrotherapy helps 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 only recommend the use of a hydrotherapy centre that is approved by the Canine Hydrotherapy Association.

**Follow up radiography** is performed at intervals post-operatively, sometimes under sedation, to confirm bone healing before free exercise is allowed.

### What does the future hold?

Degenerative joint disease, often called "arthritis", is to be expected in the operated elbow, and can already be significant at the time of surgery. This usually progresses and many dogs require future medical management for degenerative joint disease. Your own vet will advise you what is required in the future. See our information sheet on degenerative joint disease for further information.

**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](http://www.wm-referrals.com), "about us", "FAQs".**

**For further advice please contact us by phone on 07944 105501 or at [mail@wm-referrals.com](mailto:mail@wm-referrals.com). Consider texting/emailing pictures.**