



Post-operative care for patients after femoral head and neck excision

Femoral head and neck excision involves removing the ball of the ball and socket joint of the hip. The joint is then replaced by fibrous tissue. Keeping this fibrous union flexible in the early post-operative period is key to success. Femoral head and neck excision is typically performed for patients with certain fractures or dislocations of the hip, for degenerative or developmental hip disease where other options have been ruled out, and for Leg Perthes disease in young terrier breeds. Half of the success with femoral head and neck excision surgery is down to what we do intra-operatively and the other half is down to the effectiveness of the physiotherapy / hydrotherapy in the first two months post-operatively.

Medication:	Antibiotics:	We usually dispense antibiotics like claviseptin (tablets given twice daily).
	Anti-inflammatories:	We are likely to have dispensed carprofen (tablets given twice daily), or meloxicam (a liquid given once daily). These are given with food. They occasionally cause vomiting or diarrhoea, in which case prompt advice should be sought. There are a number of other excellent anti-inflammatory drugs that your own vet might use including Onsior and Previcox.
	Analgesics:	We are likely to have dispensed tramadol (tablets given twice daily) for dogs or buprenorphine (liquid given every 8 hours by mouth) for cats.

The wound must not be interfered with or bathed. We will usually place a Primipore dressing over the wound for the first few days to help protect it. An Elizabethan collar can help prevent interference with wounds. Any ooze may be gently blotted with kitchen towel, but if ooze is seen, advice should be sought.

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, especially with regard to physiotherapy.

No strict exercise restriction is required, even in the early stages of healing. It is unlikely that your pet will want to jump or climb in the early post-operative period, but early mobilisation and active limb use is advantageous.

Physiotherapy and hydrotherapy

For both cats and dogs, passive flexion / extension exercises are KEY to maintaining flexibility and range of motion at the fibrous union which develops between the hip and the thigh bones. These are performed for a few minutes, 2-3 times per day. These exercises begin a few days after surgery once the wound is comfortable to allow you to manipulate it without causing un-necessary discomfort. The exercises continue over the following two months. We will demonstrate these exercises to you. They aren't difficult to do but they do require your commitment and perseverance. Pain relieving medication is continued for two months to ensure that physiotherapy can be applied effectively over this period. Encourage walking; putting water/food bowls away from your pet's bed can encourage periodic rising and stretching.

For dogs, hydrotherapy is strongly recommended to help maintain the range of joint motion and muscle mass but swimming is delayed until 3-4 weeks post-operatively when the wound can stand immersion. Cats can certainly have hydrotherapy too from this time, but there are fewer of them that will readily tolerate it! We only recommend that you use hydrotherapy centres that are approved by the Canine Hydrotherapy Association.

Follow up radiography is only performed if limb use is not acceptable a few weeks post-operatively.

What does the future hold?

Pets usually walk well on the leg within weeks, and should definitely be walking well by two months. Pain medications should no longer be required at this time. Expect the limb to be "90%" of what it was. There may be stiffness for a few steps when they first get up after prolonged rest, but this should soon wear off once the pet "gets going". As a general rule, the bigger the animal, the more the affected limb is under-used after this surgery in the long term. That having been said, even large breed dogs usually do surprisingly well after this surgery.

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".

For further advice please contact us by phone on 07944 105501 or at mail@wm-referrals.com. Consider texting/emailing pictures.