



Post-operative care for patients after orthopaedic procedures, general advice

Your pet has had an orthopaedic procedure.

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 Onsiar and Previcox.
	Analgesics:	We may have dispensed tramadol (tablets given twice daily) for dogs or buprenorphine (liquid given every 8 hours by mouth) for cats.

Strict lead restriction is essential until we advise you differently. When cats or dogs don't have your UNDIVIDED attention, consider confining them to a cage during the early stages of healing. Cages which will fold flat when not in use are readily available from your own vet, from us, or from pet superstores, 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) **must** be prevented. Consider using stair gates and ramps, and ensure doors and windows are shut to avoid escapes! Please don't increase the activity that is allowed until you are advised to do so. If activity is not strictly restricted, then disruption of our fixation, and further injury are very real possibilities. Exercise restrictions often remain in force until x-rays confirm adequate healing.

The wound and dressings should not be interfered with or bathed. An Elizabethan collar helps prevent wound interference. We often 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 sometimes 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 please seek advice promptly. The thin white Primapore layer in place as long as it will stay on to give some on-going protection.

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 are recommended 3-5 days, 2-3 weeks and 6-8 weeks post-op. These can be with your home practice or we can do check-ups at Lichfield if travelling is not an issue, and any check-ups with us are free of further charge. For cases operated by us at Lichfield, please contact us to book an appointment for us to see the case back. For surgeries performed at your home practice, please be sure to ring your own vets to book check ups. For dogs that get very anxious at the vets, a simple phone conversation and a texted/emailed photo of the wound may well suffice in lieu of the 3-5 day check. **By 3-5 days there should be significant weight-bearing on the operated leg. There may well be some skin bruising evident. There may be some significant swelling lower down the leg at this time as inflammation "drops". Swelling and bruising should disappear with a few days.** At the 2-3 week check, sutures may be removed or left to slough.

Physiotherapy and hydrotherapy and weight control

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. A list of Canine Hydrotherapy Association centres can be found at www.wm-referrals.com, or ask your own vet for their local recommendation. Avoid weight gain during restricted activity post-op.

Follow up radiography is often performed 6-8 weeks post-operatively with us or with your own vets to confirm bone healing before free exercise is allowed. This occasionally requires sedation so it is best not to feed your pet on the day of this procedure.

Complications and prognosis

The future is usually bright after orthopaedic surgery. Implants usually don't need removal. If joints were involved in the original fracture, degenerative joint disease, often called "arthritis", may develop in the future. Your own vet will advise you of what, if any, action is required, or see our separate information sheet on this subject. Infection is uncommon, but it does occasionally happen and usually requires removal of any implants. Implant related irritation is occasionally seen. Implants may work loose in time and need removal.

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.