

### Post-operative care for patients after patella luxation surgery

The patella (knee-cap) can luxate (dislocate) out of the groove that it runs in on the femur (thigh bone). The patella is linked to the tibia (shin bone) by the patella tendon. Patella luxation is usually seen in one or both legs as a breed related "anatomical error". Patella luxation is commonest in smaller breeds of dog like Yorkies or Cavalier King Charles spaniels and in these the patella almost always luxates medially (inwards). Patella luxation can occur in larger breeds of dogs. Here, medial luxation is still commonest, but luxation laterally (outwards) can occur. Cats can get patella luxation. We improve patella alignment with the groove by moving the piece of bone where the patella tendon inserts. The relocated insertion point is fixed with pins and wire until it has fused in its new location. Occasionally, other bone cutting procedures are required (eg of the femur). We often have to overlap and/or release soft tissue as the patella is realigned. Sometimes there is a need to deepen the groove in which the patella should run. Since June 2014, we have had the extra option of using a "Ridgestop" implant to augment the height of the rim of the groove in which the patella should run, to help keep the patella tracking well.

<b>Medication:</b>	<b>Antibiotics:</b>	We usually dispense antibiotics like claviseptin (tablets given twice daily).
	<b>Anti-inflammatories:</b>	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 other excellent anti-inflammatory drugs that your own vet might use (eg Onsior and Previcox).
	<b>Analgesics:</b>	We may have dispensed tramadol (tablets given twice daily) for dogs or buprenorphine (liquid given every 8 hours by mouth) for cats.

**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 restriction and supervision of activity** is required. When cats or dogs don't have your UNDIVIDED attention, consider cage confinement. **Preventing jumping is essential until you are told otherwise, or fracture of the tibia may occur which is VERY challenging to fix.** Cages which will fold flat when not in use are readily available from your own vet, from us, or from pet superstores etc. 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! Please don't increase the activity until you are advised to do so.

#### 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 we expect significant weight-bearing on the operated leg; that there will be some skin bruising evident, and there may be some significant swelling around the ankle at this time as inflammation "drops" down the leg. Swelling and bruising should then disappear with a few days.** At the 2-3 week check, sutures may be removed.

#### Physiotherapy and hydrotherapy

Encouraging gentle walking is helpful. Passive flexion/extension exercises may 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](http://www.wm-referrals.com), or ask your own vet for advice.

#### What does the future hold?

The future is usually bright after surgery. Implants usually don't need removal. Degenerative joint disease (DJD) may develop in the future (see separate information sheet). X-rays may be required after 6-8 weeks to confirm healing. This sometimes requires sedation.

**Complications like infection** are uncommon, but occasionally occur. Infection, implant loosening or implant irritation require removal of metalwork. Further surgery is occasionally needed if luxation persists. Other joint problems like cruciate ligament rupture can exacerbate a pre-existing tendency for patella luxation. Patella luxation and cruciate ligament rupture may then be addressed at the same time. Cruciate ligament injury is a common stifle problem in dogs and can occur later in dogs that have previously had patella luxation 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](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**