



Post-operative care for dogs after total hip replacement

Total hip replacement is a surgery that is used to salvage function when the joint between the pelvis and the thigh bone is severely compromised. This is usually because of hip dysplasia and / or severe degenerative joint disease but can be applicable in selected cases with fractures or dislocations. It is a technically advanced and challenging procedure. Experience is the key to good rates of success and one of our surgeons, Andy Whittingham, has performed over 200 of these procedures. When complications occur they are often very serious requiring revision surgery with an uncertain outcome. You should accept a 5% possibility of serious complications occurring before deciding to embark on this surgery.

Medication:	Antibiotics:	We will dispense antibiotics, usually 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 often dispense tramadol (tablets given twice daily).

Wounds must not be interfered with or bathed. An Elizabethan collar can help prevent interference with wounds. Any ooze may be gently blotted from the wound with kitchen towel, but if ooze is seen, advice should be sought.

Rechecks a few days after surgery will usually be with us but could be with your own vet to save un-necessary travelling. All our post-op check-ups 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-operatively when we can remove sutures/staples and check that all is going to plan.

Dressings. A Primipore will be used post-operatively to keep the wound clean and to offer some protection. These should be kept dry at all times and usually remain in situ for a few days. They can be left to fall off on their own. If they do become significantly wet, seek advice promptly.

Strict restriction and supervision of activity is required for 8 weeks following surgery. When your dog doesn't have your UNDIVIDED attention, you will need to confine them to a cage during the early stages of healing. Jumbo sized cages which will fold flat when not in use are readily available from pet superstores, Argos, many DIY stores or from on-line retailers. 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. Running/jumping/climbing (into cars, upstairs, onto furniture etc) must be prevented. Use stair gates and ramps where necessary.

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 and swimming are NOT recommended after total hip replacement.

Follow up radiography

X-rays may be required 6-8 weeks post-operatively to assess progress.

What does the future hold?

The future is usually bright after total hip replacement surgery. Implants are designed to remain in place for the duration of your pet's life. The shorter lifespan of dogs means that implants don't wear out and need replacing, as they sometimes do in people. The joint has been replaced, so degenerative joint disease, often called "arthritis", is no longer an issue.

Complications

Dislocation of the components of the artificial hip joint is possible and might require revision surgery. This is less likely if restriction of exercise and activity is adhered to. Infection is uncommon, but does occasionally happen and usually requires removal of metalwork and conversion to a femoral head and neck excision (see separate information sheet). Implant movement, migration, failure or breakage is less common with recent improvements in implants/ technique, but can occur.

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