



Post-operative care after surgery for un-united anconeal process, UAP

This surgery is usually carried out in young dogs, often German Shepherd Dogs. A piece of bone in the elbow joint that should have firmly attached to the rest of ulna by 5 months of age doesn't do so, and remains loose within the joint. Sometimes this bone can be stabilised with a screw but sometimes it needs to be removed. We will often consider cutting the ulna below the elbow to allow the bones making up the elbow to settle into their positions of "best-fit". If the ulna has been cut, this "fracture" is left to heal with the formation of a callus – a mass of bone – which you will usually be able 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! Occasional cases with UAP have septic arthritis. This infection will usually resolve once the fragment is removed and after prolonged courses of antibiotics.

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

Anti-inflammatories: We usually dispense 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. Other 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 must not be interfered with or bathed. 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.

Dressings may be used post-operatively to help control swelling. These should be kept dry at all times. If they do become significantly wet, or if they slip, then they can be removed. If dressings are removed early some swelling may develop lower down the leg which resolves over a few days. Dressings are removed three days post-operatively, although the thin white Primapore layer that is in direct contact with the skin is often left to give the wound 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.

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 6-8 weeks 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 is often already significant at the time of surgery. This will progress 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

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