



Post-operative care for patients after fracture fixation surgery done as a mobile surgery service by West Midlands Referrals

Fractures are fixed with a range of metal work, including pins, wires, plates and screws.

Medication:	Antibiotics:	Antibiotics like claviseptin are usually given for a few days (usually tablets given twice daily).
	Anti-inflammatories:	Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs usually start/resume the morning after surgery. These are tablets (eg carprofen, Onsior or Previcox), or liquid (meloxicam). They should be given with food. If vomiting or diarrhoea is noted, stop medication and seek prompt advice.
	Analgesics:	We may have dispensed tramadol (tablets given twice daily) for dogs or buprenorphine (liquid given every 8 hours by mouth) for cats.

Wounds must not be interfered with or bathed. An Elizabethan collar helps prevent wound interference. It is the owner's responsibility to prevent wound interference. If the wound is being interfered with, please ring promptly for advice. Any wound ooze may be gently blotted with kitchen towel. If ooze is seen, seek prompt advice.

Rechecks are recommended at 2-3 weeks and 6-8 weeks post-op. Rechecks at 3-5 days are advised if there are issues. Check ups at your home practice are chargeable. Please ring your own vets to book these. Where travelling is an issue, and/or for pets that get very anxious at the vets, a simple phone conversation and/or a text/email photo of the wound may well suffice in lieu of the 3-5 day check. **By 3-5 days there should be good weight-bearing on the operated leg. There may well be bruising evident. There may be swelling lower down the leg at this time as inflammation "drops" down the leg. Swelling and bruising should disappear with a few days.** At the 2-3 week check, sutures may be removed or left to slough on their own.

Dressings may be used post-operatively to control swelling or to provide extra support. The interval at which dressings are subsequently changed, and the period for which they are needed will vary from case to case. Dressings should be kept dry at all times. If they become wet or slip, or if they cause irritation, please seek advice promptly. This is especially important if there are splints/casts incorporated in the dressing. **If you are unsure when the next dressing change is required, or when the dressing should be removed, seek prompt advice.** Please don't attempt to replace dressings yourself, and only remove dressings under specific advice to do so, and then only if absolutely sure that there is no risk of being bitten etc. An Elizabethan collar should then be used until a vet has advised you to the contrary. Leave any underlying white thin Primapore dressing in contact with the skin to fall off on its own.

Strict restriction and supervision of activity is required. When cats or dogs don't have your UNDIVIDED attention, consider confining them to a cage during the early stages of healing. Cages that fold flat when not in use are widely available from 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, onto kitchen work tops etc) should be prevented. Consider using stair gates and ramps, and ensure doors and windows are shut to avoid escapes!

Immediately post op

Your pet can eat and drink on the evening after surgery. Eating, drinking and urination should have been seen on the morning after surgery, and at least once daily thereafter – **if not, please call us without delay.** Defaecation sometimes isn't seen for a few days post-op.

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 can help 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. Ask your own vet for their recommendation for a hydrotherapy centre in your area.

Follow up radiography, to confirm bone healing before increased exercise is allowed, can be performed 8 weeks post-operatively. Please don't feed your pet beforehand as sedation or anaesthesia will probably be required. Follow up X-rays are chargeable.

What does the future hold?

The future is usually bright after fracture repair. Implants usually don't need removal. If joints were involved in the original fracture, degenerative joint disease, (DJD, often called "arthritis"), may develop in the future. Your own vet will advise you if any action is required.

Complications

Infection occasionally occurs and usually requires removal of metalwork. Implant related irritation is occasionally seen. Implants may work loose in time and need removal. Sometimes implants can ache in cold weather and this irritation occasionally requires implant removal.

The price that you pay your vet on the day doesn't include further consults, medication, dressings, x-rays or revision surgery.

We are available to give advice on the case in the post-operative period, but initial contact should be to your own vet. Consider texting/emailing pictures to them. They will then contact us as required and we'll be pleased to give advice.

25/11/2017