



Post-operative care: general advice for patients after orthopaedic procedures done by West Midlands Referrals as a mobile surgery

Your pet has had an orthopaedic procedure.

Medication:	Antibiotics:	We usually dispense antibiotics like claviseptin (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 this 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.

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 fold flat when not in use are available; these may be available from your own vet, or from pet/DIY superstores, Argos or on-line retailers. For cats, several short periods of supervised walking around the kitchen are allowed each day. For dogs, activity anywhere outside of the house including the garden should be lead restricted. 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, 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 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 from your vet 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 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.

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. Ask your own vet for their recommendation for a hydrotherapy centre in your area. Avoid weight gain during restricted activity post-op.

Follow up radiography, to confirm bone healing before free exercise is allowed, can be performed 6-8 weeks post-operatively with us for no extra charge. It is best not to feed your pet beforehand as sedation or anaesthesia will probably be required. These follow up X-rays done at your own vets are chargeable.

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.

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. 4th November 2016