

Post-operative care after implant removal

Most implants are placed with the intention of leaving them in for keeps, but sometimes removal is required. We most often place Implants during surgeries for fracture fixation, bone-cutting techniques for cruciate management, and patella stabilisation surgeries. Reasons requiring implant removal include associated infection (which will not clear up unless permanent foreign material is removed); implant loosening (which means the implant is ineffective and may be causing irritation); implant breakage (which usually reflects metal fatigue and early over-use before bone has had a chance to adequately heal; irritation or aches (eg lameness in cold weather with substantial metal plates just under the skin in the lower limb).

Medication:	Antibiotics:	We usually dispense antibiotics like 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 Onsiar and Previcox.
	Analgesics:	We sometimes dispense tramadol (tablets given twice daily).

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 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 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 lead restriction is less essential after implant removal than it was after the initial surgery, because healing of bone injuries should have progressed before implants are removed. However while the tissues get used to losing the support of the metalwork, restrict activity anywhere outside of the house including the garden until the check up at 2-3 weeks post-op. 10-15 minutes of lead restricted exercise is typically allowed, three times a day for this period. Running/jumping/climbing (into cars, upstairs, onto furniture) should be prevented.

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 several days post-op.

Rechecks are recommended at 2-3 weeks and 6-8 weeks post-op. Rechecks at 3-5 days are only advised if there are issues. Check-ups with us at Lichfield are free of further charge and only take a few minutes. Check ups at your home practice are chargeable. For rechecks at Lichfield, please contact us to book an appointment. For rechecks at your home practice, 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 with us 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 significant weight-bearing on the operated leg. There be some bruising evident. There may be some 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. 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, or ask your own vet for their local recommendation. Avoid weight gain during restricted activity post-op.

Further follow up radiography, may be advised before free exercise is allowed, and can be performed conscious with us for no extra charge. This only takes a few minutes with our hand-held X-ray generator. It is best not to feed your pet beforehand just in case we need to sedate. If X-rays are done at your own vets these will be chargeable and will likely require sedation or anaesthesia.

What does the future hold?

For prognosis, please refer to the aftercare sheet given at the time of the first surgery.

Our fixed prices include any follow up consults and x-rays done with us, but don't include further medication, revision surgery or implant removal surgery. For further details please see www.wm-referrals.com, "about us", "FAQs". Consults, dressings, x-rays and drugs from your usual vet will be chargeable. For further advice please contact us on 07944 105501 or at mail@wm-referrals.com. Consider texting/emailing pictures.