

Post-operative care for patients after hip toggle for hip dislocation

Hips can luxate/dislocate because of trauma (eg falls or traffic accidents), especially if there is underlying hip dysplasia (HD). During dislocation, chunks of bone and cartilage can be pulled off the femoral head and this can be severe enough to compromise the hip joint for the future. These fractures and the severity of underlying hip dysplasia might not be fully appreciated until intra-operatively. Hips might be “reduced” (put back into the socket) “open” with surgery, or “closed” (non surgical) reduction might be attempted. About 50% of closed reductions will re-luxate in the days and weeks after reduction.

A hip toggle is a strong suture that is placed to stabilise dislocated hips by holding the “ball” of the femur (thigh bone) in the “socket” of the pelvis (hip) bone. The prognosis after toggles is generally good, though occasional cases re-dislocate in the days/weeks after surgery.

Re-luxation is more likely with over-extension of the hip during activity /jumping and this MUST be prevented post-op. In the event of relaxation after surgical stabilisation, or if intra-operative appreciation of fractures and/or HD makes relaxation likely, then we often advise femoral head and neck excision as a salvage procedure (see separate information sheet).

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 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 cage confinement. Cages which fold flat when not in use are available from your own vet, from us, or from pet/DIY superstores 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 strictly restricted, then re-luxation is a very real possibilities.

The wound 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 within a few days. 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.

Immediately post op

Your pet 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. **By 3-5 days there should be significant weight-bearing on the operated leg. There may well be significant bruising and swelling lower down the leg at this time as inflammation “drops” down the leg. Swelling and bruising should disappear with a few 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 with us at Barton under Needwood are free of charge. Check ups at your home practice are chargeable. Contact us to book rechecks at Barton. Ring your own vets to book checks there. Where travelling is an issue, and/or for pets that get very anxious, a phone conversation with us with photos and videos may well suffice in lieu of checks. Sutures may be left to slough naturally.

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. Avoiding hip over-extension is advised for a few weeks post-op, so we generally don't advise hydrotherapy or passive range of motion exercises for these cases. Avoid weight gain during restricted activity post-op.

Follow up radiography, to confirm the hip is still seated correctly is not usually required, but would be free of further charge under our fixed price scheme. This usually only takes a few minutes with our hand-held X-ray generator.

Complications and prognosis

The future is usually bright after hip luxation surgery. The toggle is permanent material but it will ultimately break. By this time, the hip joint should have restabilised itself with its joint capsule. The toggle rarely needs to be removed. The hip is a joint, so some degenerative joint disease, often called “arthritis”, may develop in the future. Your own vet will advise you if any action is required, or see our separate information sheet on this subject. Infection is uncommon, but it does occasionally happen and might require removal of any implants.

Our fixed prices include follow up consults and x-rays done with us, and medication for around 5 days post-operatively, but don't include further medication or revision surgery. Consults, procedures and drugs from your usual vet will be chargeable. For further details on our fixed prices please see www.wm-referrals.com, “about us”, “FAQs”. For further advice please contact us on 07944 105501 or at enquiries@wm-referrals.com. Consider texting/emailing pictures and short videos.