

Post-operative care for patients after patella luxation surgery with Ridgestop

The patella (knee-cap) can luxate (dislocate) out of the groove that it runs in on the femur (thigh bone). The patella is linked to the tibia (shin bone) by the patella tendon. Patella luxation (PL) is often seen in both legs as a breed related problem. PL is commonest in smaller breeds of dog like Yorkies or Cavalier King Charles spaniels, and the patella usually luxates medially (inwards). PL can occur in larger breeds of dogs. Here, medial luxation is still commonest, but luxation laterally (outwards) can occur. Cats can get PL. We can improve patella/groove tracking by using a "Ridgestop" implant to augment the height of the rim of the groove in which the patella runs.

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.

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 Primapore dressing, secured with glue. Primapores fall off in anything from a few days to a couple of weeks. Without glue, it is very unlikely that you will be able to get another Primapore to stick, so please leave ours as long as possible! A little dry discharge may be evident on the Primapore, but if any on-going discharge should be gently blotted with kitchen towel, and seek advice promptly. More substantial dressings are occasionally used initially over the Primapore to reduce swelling. These should be kept dry. If they become wet or slip then they can be removed, leaving the Primapore in place as long as possible to give some on-going protection.

Restriction and supervision of activity is required for the first 2-3 weeks. When cats or dogs don't have your attention, consider cage confinement. Cages which will fold flat are available from your own vet, from us, or from pet superstores etc. 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 regular periods of a few minutes of walking exercise. For both species, running/jumping/climbing (into cars, upstairs, onto furniture, onto kitchen work tops etc) should be prevented. Consider using stair gates, ramps, and keep doors and windows shut to stop escapes! Please don't increase the activity until you are advised to do so.

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 with us at Burton are free of further charge and only take a few minutes. Check ups at your home practice are chargeable. For rechecks at Burton, 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 may well be significant 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

Encouraging gentle walking is helpful. Passive flexion/extension exercises may help maintain flexibility and joint motion. Hydrotherapy might be considered, usually in dogs, to 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, is not usually required. Ridgestop implants don't show on Xrays, though the screws that hold them do. Xrays can usually be performed conscious with us for no extra charge, while you wait. 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? What complications can occur?

The future is usually bright though our experience is that pets can take a few weeks to "get going" on Ridgestops. The physical presence of the implant in the joint can make it feel crepitant ("grating") when the joint is manipulated. This can easily be misinterpreted as raging degenerative joint disease (DJD). It doesn't seem to bother the pets. Implants usually don't need removal. DJD may develop in the future (see separate information sheet). Infection, implant loosening or implant irritation occasionally occur and require removal of implants. Further surgery is occasionally needed if luxation persists. Other joint problems like cruciate ligament rupture can exacerbate a pre-existing tendency for patella luxation and cruciate ligament rupture may also need to be addressed. Cruciate ligament injury is a common stifle problem in dogs and can occur later in dogs that have previously had patella luxation 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.