

Post-operative care after surgery for un-united anconeal process, UAP

This surgery is usually carried out in young dogs, often German Shepherd Dogs. A piece of bone in the elbow joint that should have firmly attached to the rest of ulna by 5 months of age doesn't do so, and remains loose within the joint. Sometimes this bone can be stabilised with a screw but sometimes it needs to be removed. We will often consider cutting the ulna below the elbow to allow the bones making up the elbow to settle into their positions of "best-fit". If the ulna has been cut, this "fracture" is left to heal with the formation of a callus – a mass of bone – which you will usually be able to see and to feel on the back edge of the upper forearm. This firm swelling is normal and natural way that bone heals. This callus usually reduces over the following months and years. It is of no consequence to your pet, but it worries some owners so we warn you about it in advance to avoid you getting an unexpected surprise! Occasional cases with UAP have septic arthritis. This infection will usually resolve once the fragment is removed and after prolonged courses of antibiotics.

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 often dispense tramadol, (tablets given twice daily).

The wound must not be interfered with or bathed. An Elizabethan collar can help prevent interference with wounds. Any ooze may be gently blotted with kitchen towel, but if ooze is seen, advice should be sought.

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 further charge and only take a few minutes. Check ups at your home practice are chargeable. For rechecks at Barton under Needwood, 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 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.

Dressings may be used post-operatively to help control swelling. These should be kept dry at all times. If they do become significantly wet, or if they slip, then they can be removed. If dressings are removed early some swelling may develop lower down the leg which resolves over a few days. Dressings are removed three days post-operatively, although the thin white Primapore layer that is in direct contact with the skin is often left to give the wound some on-going protection.

Strict lead restriction is required in the early stages of healing, anywhere outside of the house including the garden. Running/jumping/climbing (into cars, upstairs, onto furniture) should all be prevented. Consider using stair gates and ramps. However several short periods of gentle lead restricted walking exercise per day are welcomed.

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 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.

Follow up radiography to confirm bone healing when the un-united fragment has been fixed with a screw, can be performed conscious 6-8 weeks post-operatively with us for no extra charge. Bone healing must be confirmed before free exercise is allowed. Xray with us usually 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?

Degenerative joint disease, often called "arthritis", is to be expected in the operated elbow, and is often already significant at the time of surgery. This will progress and many dogs require future medical management for degenerative joint disease. Your own vet will advise you what is required in the future. See our information sheet on degenerative joint disease for further information

Our fixed prices include any follow up consults and x-rays done with us, but don't include further medication or revision 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 enquiries@wm-referrals.com. Consider texting/emailing pictures.