

Post operative care – Stifle Surgery

Name :..... Date:.....

Your pet has had a procedure to treat Cranial Cruciate Ligament Disease. This procedure involves changing the angle of the kneecap ligament to the shin bone by cutting its bony attachment and moving it forwards, this is then anchored with metal implants and screws.

Whilst this is a major procedure, typically results for a swift return to weight bearing are very good.

We are now happy that your pet is ok to go home. The pain relief required can be managed at home via oral medication. Following a general anaesthetic it is not unusual for you pet to feel a bit under the weather, and may want to sleep quite a lot.

Medications :

Anti inflammatory –

Give with or after food. Please stop if any vomiting or diarrhoea develops and contact your vets.

Antibiotics –

Care Instructions

❖ 1-10 days post surgery.

- Post operative check ups are due at 3 and 10 days post surgery. This appointment should be with your own vets. The stitches will be removed between 10 and 14 days.
- Strict rest is required. Short controlled walks out to the garden for toileting only.
- Your pet will need to be kept in a restricted area. Ideally a crate or confined to one room.
- No playing with other pets.
- Swelling of the knee is common and some bruising may be visible. A cold compress may help to reduce this. If your dog will tolerate this it can be done 3-4 times a day for 15 minute duration. (A bag of frozen peas wrapped in a towel works well) The swelling should resolve within 14 days.
- When walking your dog on the lead, try to walk as slowly as possible. This will encourage your dog to put the effected leg to the ground, using it correctly rather than hopping.
- If your dog is old or quite heavy and struggling on 3 legs, it is a good idea to use a large towel under their abdomen as a sling to help them when standing up and walking. This is also useful to prevent slipping when walking over slippery surfaces like wood/vinyl floors.
- Avoid steps and prevent from any kind of jumping up. If steps can't be avoided make sure your dog is fully supported using a towel as described above.
- Passive physiotherapy can be performed if you dog will tolerate it; these exercises will aid keeping the leg supple, prevent the joint from stiffening up and reduce swelling.
- It should not be painful and can be done multiple times throughout the day.

Lay your dog on his/her side with the effected leg uppermost. Gentle massage the leg from the foot to the hip/rump area, this relaxes and warms the muscles. Avoid touching the surgical wound. If comfortable with this you can move onto gently moving the limb, start with flexing and extending the foot, do this 10 times. Move up through the joints repeating the gentle flexing and extending 10 times for each one. Taking extra care with the knee as this may be sore.

The discharging nurse will happily demonstrate and answer any questions.

❖ **10 – 28 days post surgery.**

- Start multiple, short controlled slow walks on a short lead. Begin with 5-10 minutes 2-3 times a day on flat surfaces for 7 days. Always try to ensure that your dog is using the leg correctly, placing the foot to the ground.
- Continue massage and physiotherapy ideally before each walk.
- A warm compress can be used to warm the muscles before walks and cool compress after walks. These can be placed on whilst massaging.
- After 7 days if your dog is comfortable walks can be increased to 15-20 minutes in length with the same level of control 3 times a day.

❖ **4 – 6 weeks post surgery.**

- Mr Whiting would like to see you dog back for a check up between 4 and 6 weeks post operation. Appointments are available Monday – Thursday between 9am and 10 am at the St Columb Major Hospital.
- Providing all is well, gradually increasing your dogs exercise will be advised. Starting with using a longer lead or a flexi lead (Adjustable). Care should be taken to avoid free running and jumping. The key point here is control.
- Figure of eight walking will strengthen muscles, walking around 4-5 times in each direction and slowly over 3-4 weeks tighten the figure of eight pattern, but avoid sharp turns.
- Sit to stand exercises are very good to strengthen the thigh muscles. You may need to use your foot against the affected leg to prevent it from turning out to the side. Guiding them to stand up correctly. Alternatively have the affected leg against the wall.
- Hydrotherapy can be introduced once the stitches have been removed and the wound is fully healed. This is an excellent rehabilitation aid as it promotes joint movement and muscle strengthening under low impact.
- Your veterinary surgeon will need to complete a referral form for the hydrotherapy centre.

❖ **8 weeks post surgery and onwards.**

- Off lead exercise can be slowly introduced. Please take care to not allow your pet to charge around out of control.
- Avoid throwing balls and boisterous playing with other dogs as this will usually include tight turning and lots of jumping. Once the muscles are back to full strength (when the thigh muscles are the same size in both legs) this can gradually be resumed.
- Walking up and down steps, hills and walking on sand will increase muscle tone. Please Introduce and increase this slowly.

Lastly, Many thanks for coming to see us at A30referrals and we do hope to see you through a happy and successful rehab program.

Kind Regards

Colin Whiting BVSc CertSAS MRCVS

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any concerns or questions.

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