

Post-Operative Fracture Repair Instructions

PLEASE NOTE - These instructions are rather generic and intended to provide caregivers an idea of what is expected following fracture repair. Actual instructions may vary considerably depending upon the nature of the fracture and the nature of the patient.

Activity Limitation:

Limit activity to brief leash walks for urination and defecation until the bone is healed based on radiographs (x-rays). For the first 2 weeks after surgery, limit the walks to 5-10 minutes 2-4 times daily. For hind limb fractures, supporting with a towel or other such sling under the belly and in front of the hind legs may be necessary when going across slick floors or up and down stairs. After the first 2 weeks, if the pet will tolerate it, the duration of the walks can be increased to 15-20 minutes. When in doubt, less activity is better than more.

Cast Maintenance (if necessary):

The cast should be maintained for approximately 6 weeks. Keep the cast clean and dry at all times. If it becomes wet or excessively soiled, it may need to be changed immediately.

Return to your veterinarian weekly while your dog is wearing the cast to make sure that all is well.

Monitor the toes for coldness, swelling and pain. If any of those symptoms are noted, your dog should be seen by a veterinarian as soon as possible.

Incisional Care:

If the incision is covered by a cast or splint, you will not be able to assess the incision. If the incision is not covered by a cast or splint, it should be monitored for discharge such as blood, serum or pus. If noted, please call your veterinarian as soon as possible. Contrary to some recommendations, licking the incision is not a good idea. The patient's tongue should be kept off of the incision. As such, it is reasonable for pets to wear an Elizabethan collar ("cone of shame") or an inflatable donut collar. We recommend Elizabethan collars for smaller patients and inflatable donut collars for larger patients.

Radiographs:

Radiographs to assess healing of the bone should be taken by your veterinarian approximately 8 weeks following surgery. Assuming the bone is healed at that time, you will be directed to return your pet to unrestricted activity over the subsequent month. If necessary, an instruction sheet with that protocol will be provided.