

## **Post-Operative Lateral Fabello-Tibial Suture Instructions**

**PLEASE NOTE - These instructions are rather generic and intended to provide caregivers an idea of what is expected following this procedure. Actual instructions may vary considerably depending upon many factors.**

Your dog received an epidural injection of an anesthetic agent today called bupivacaine. The purpose of the injection is to relieve post-operative discomfort. The downside of this injection is that it can lead to temporary weakness of the hind limbs and urine retention. As such, your dog will most likely require some assistance when standing and walking. It is imperative that his or her urination be observed. If he or she has not urinated by the morning following surgery, please contact your veterinarian. He or she might recommend bringing the patient back so that his or her urinary bladder can be palpated and possibly expressed.

### **Activity Limitation:**

Limit activity to brief leash walks for urination and defecation for 6 weeks post-operatively. Limit the walks to 5-10 minutes 2-4 times daily. 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. Smaller dogs should be carried up and down stairs. When in doubt, less activity is better than more.

### **Range-of-Motion Exercises:**

Beginning on the morning following surgery, apply a cold compress (e.g. a bag of frozen peas wrapped in a towel) to the operated stifles (knees) for approximately 5 minutes if your dog will tolerate it. Remove the cold compress. Gently tickle the toes thus causing your dog to pull the leg up as far as is tolerable. Initially, this will not be very far. Hold the paw at that extreme for 5-10 seconds and then allow the leg to extend and relax for 5-10 seconds. That is one repetition. Perform 10-15 repetitions 3-4 times daily. For the first 2-4 days post-operatively, apply cold compresses for 5 minutes before and after the exercise sessions. Thereafter, apply a warm compress (moist towel heated in a microwave oven) before and after the exercises.

Please keep in mind that the goal is to achieve a nearly complete range of motion by 10-14 days post-operatively. Do not try to accomplish this in one or two days. Go slowly. Take "baby" steps.

### **Incisional Care:**

The patient may leave the hospital with a small patch bandage covering the incision. The patch bandage generally comes off on its own 1-3 days after surgery. If it is adhered well, it may stay on until skin incision assessment at 10-14 days post-operatively. Regardless of when the bandage comes off, it does not need to be replaced. Once the incision is uncovered, monitor it for discharge such as blood, serum or pus. If noted please call your veterinarian. Return to your veterinarian 10-14 days post-operatively to assess progress and remove the skin sutures.