

## Discharge Instructions – Humeral Fracture Repair (Cat)

**Surgery:** Fracture repair of humeral fracture

**Prognosis:** Your pet has a good chance to make a full recovery.

**Convalescent period:** Weight bearing is typically seen within the first week after surgery. By 2 months after the surgery the lameness should be mild or have resolved. Please give us a call if your companion stops using the operated limb.

**Diet:** If your companion will not eat the regular diet, Gerber baby food such as strained chicken or beef, canned tuna, canned gourmet cat food should be offered for 3 days and then wean back onto the regular diet over the next three days.

**Bowel movements:** Your companion may not have a bowel movement for the next 4 days after surgery. If your companion does not have a bowel movement after 4 days or is straining to defecate, constipation may be present. Unflavored Metamucil or Miralax, at a dose of  $\frac{1}{4}$  of a teaspoon, can be mixed in canned food (in each meal) as a laxative. If this treatment is not effective, other laxatives can be prescribed.

Provide a litter pan with a low entry to minimize pain when entering the litter pan. Pain associated with entering a litter pan can cause a cat to refuse using a litter pan and may result in long-term inappropriate eliminations around the house.

**Exercise:**

1. For the first 8 weeks after surgery, keep your pet confined to a small room that has no elevated surfaces to jump on. Cover all slippery floors in this room with throw rugs or indoor/outdoor turf carpet for the first 8 weeks after surgery. If this is not possible, put your pet in a large cage with the cat litter box within the cage. Do not provide knitted blankets that could entrap the toenails of the operated limb, and potentially injure the repaired fractured bone.
2. Strenuous activity may result in failure of the surgical implants to hold the fracture together.

### **Rehabilitation therapy**

1. First 3 days after discharge: Apply a cold compress (frozen peas, frozen corn or a cold gel pack) to the surgical site times daily, twenty minutes each time for the next three days. Place a thin towel between the cold compress and the incision for patient comfort. The cold compress will reduce swelling, bruising and pain.
2. Day 4 to day 14: Three steps are taken during each rehabilitation therapy session: warm compressing, passive range of motion exercises followed by cold compress.
  - a. Apply a warm compress (warm water bottle or microwaved raw rice in a cloth bag) to the surgical site three times daily, ten minutes each time. Monitor the temperature of the compress so that it does not burn the skin. Place a thin towel between the warm compress and the surgical site for patient comfort. This step helps to loosen connective tissue in preparation for passive range of motion exercises.
  - b. Passive range of motion exercises should be started on the 4th day after surgery and should be done after application of the warm compress. Passive range of motion exercises are done by flexing and extending the shoulder, elbow and carpus joints three sessions daily for five minutes. This step helps to break down adhesions and scar tissue so that your pet will attain normal or near normal range of motion. Massage the muscles of the forelimb and especially work on the muscles on the upper limb. This can be done after the passive range of motion session.

c. After the range of motion exercises, apply a cold compress to the surgical site for five minutes. This step reduces inflammation.

3. Day 14 to the 8th week postop: As long as your pet is bearing a moderate amount of weight on the limb, supervised walking around the house is permitted. Explosive activity such as running, sprinting, jumping, twisting/turning are not permitted as injury to the soft tissue or bone may occur. In addition, metal implants breakage may break or become dislodged from the bone. Continue range of motion exercises, as described above 5 minutes (or about 20 repetitions) for 6 weeks; during this time, the warm and cold compress therapy is not needed. NOTE: If possible, we also recommend rehabilitation therapy at by a professional rehabilitation therapist or your primary care veterinarian's choice, which can start in 2 weeks after surgery.

4. Beyond 8 weeks after surgery. As long as the radiographs indicate that the fractures have healed, your pet may resume normal activity. If possible, highly recommend that your cat stay indoors to avoid sustaining another serious injury.

Incision:

1. If a band aid is covering the incision, please remove it tomorrow. When the incision is exposed, daily, check the incision for signs of infection: redness, swelling, pain or discharge.
2. Do not allow licking of the incision as this could cause an infection or open the incision. An Elizabethan collar obtained from us or a pet store, should be kept on your companion for 2 weeks to prevent licking of the incision.

Follow-up examinations:

1. The first appointment at 2 weeks after surgery will be via Telemedicine. Please send us a photo of the incision and a video of your pet walking; send these to your pet's surgeon's email or cell phone number.
2. Radiographs (x-ray) of the repaired fracture site should be done in 8 weeks to check the healing process. Please fast your pet starting at 10 PM, the night before the appointment, as sedation may be needed. Please set up this appointment today, as we have a very busy outpatient schedule.

IV catheter bandage: Your companion had an intravenous catheter for the administration of IV fluids during anesthesia. The catheter has been removed and a small bandage has been placed over the site (typically on the lower part of a front or hind limb) to prevent bleeding. Please remove this bandage when you arrive home.

Medications: A pain management protocol has been prescribed which should be very effective. If your pet seems to be uncomfortable, provide the pain medications as prescribed below. If your pet still seems painful, please give us a call.