

## Discharge Instructions – Tibial Shaft Fracture (Dog) with Bandage

**Surgery:** The tibial fracture was surgically stabilized with internal fixation

**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 to 3 months after the surgery the lameness should 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, a homemade bland diet (50:50 mix of lean hamburger, chicken breast, lean turkey meat and a carbohydrate source such as rice, potato, or pasta) 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 1 teaspoon/50 lbs body weight can be mixed in canned food (in each meal) as a laxative. If this treatment is not effective, other laxatives can be prescribed.

**Exercise:**

1. Cover all slippery floors with throw rugs or indoor/outdoor turf carpet for the first 8 weeks after surgery.
2. Limit activity to very short leash walks for bowel and urinary purposes until the bone is healed (typically 8 weeks). Do not leave your companion off the leash for 3 months or as recommended by the surgeon. No jumping, climbing stairs or rough-housing with other pets or people. Strenuous activity may result in failure of the surgical implants to hold the fracture together.

**Care of Bandage:** A bandage has been placed on the operated hind limb, which will protect the incision and to minimize swelling of the limb. Check the toes twice daily for signs of swelling or coldness. When going outdoors, place a plastic bag on the bottom of the bandage to prevent it from getting wet. Please remove the bandage in 8 days. Please keep the bandage clean and dry. In the event of bandage slippage or soiling, please remove the bandage. If you have any concerns, please give us a call.

**Incision:** After the bandage is removed, please check the incision for signs of infection: redness, swelling, pain or discharge and call if these are noted. There are no external sutures that need to be removed. An Elizabethan collar should be worn for 2 weeks to prevent her from chewing the incision.

**Rehabilitation therapy:** After the bandage has been removed, rehabilitation therapy program can begin at home.

1. Three steps are completed during each rehabilitation therapy session: warm compressing, passive range of motion exercises followed by cold compress.
  - a. Apply a warm compress (warm water bottle, 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 done after application of the warm compress. Passive range of motion exercises are done by flexing and extending the hip, stifle and hock (ankle) 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 hind 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.

2. Day 14 to the 8th week postop: As long as your pet is bearing a moderate amount of weight on the limb, 10-minute leash walks three times daily are 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 twice daily, 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.

3. Beyond 8 weeks after surgery. As long as the radiographs indicate that the fractures have healed, your pet may resume normal activity.

Follow-up examinations:

1. Please send a photo of the incision and a video of your dog walking in 2 weeks to your pet's surgeon via text message or email.

2. Radiographs (x-ray) of the operated limb should be done in 8 weeks to check the healing process. Please make an appointment today for this appointment.

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.

Implant removal: The implants can be removed after complete bone healing is present, if the metal is irritating the tissues or if a chronic infection develops.

Medications: A pain management protocol has been prescribed which should be very effective. If your pet seems to be uncomfortable (whining, restless), the most common cause for this is that your pet needs to urinate. Take your pet outdoors to eliminate. If your pet still seems painful, please give us a call.