

## Discharge Instructions Following Lateral Imbrication Surgery – Cat

**Cruciate Surgery** - Lateral Imbrication for cranial cruciate ligament reconstruction

**Prognosis:** About 85% of patients receiving this type of surgery will have a good outcome. Arthritis may cause residual stiffness, but you should contact us if this is seen after full healing has taken place (about four months).

**Convalescent period:** Weight bearing is typically seen within the first week after surgery. By two weeks after surgery most cats are bearing a moderate amount of weight on the operated limb. By four months after the surgery the lameness should have resolved. Please give us a call if your companion is not convalescing in this manner on the operated limb.

**Diet:** Feed your companion &&PT/his/her/its regular diet. If your companion will not eat the regular diet, a highly palatable food such as Gerber chicken or beef baby food, or canned tuna should be offered for 3 days and then wean back onto the regular diet over the next three days.

**Bowel movements:** Please provide a litter pan that has low sides. 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. Miralax at a dose of 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 by us.

**Exercise:**

Limit activity to a small room that has no elevated surfaces for jumping or a large cage for 8 weeks.

Note: Strenuous activity may result in opening of the incision. No jumping, climbing stairs or rough-housing with other pets or people.

**Rehabilitation therapy**

NOTE: some cats will not cooperate to have rehabilitation therapy and you may not be able to conduct the following rehabilitation program. Fortunately, most cats will do most of their own therapy without human assistance.

1. First 3 days after surgery: Apply a cold compress (frozen peas, frozen corn or a cold gel pack) to the operated knee three times daily, twenty minutes each time for the next three days. Place a thin towel between the cold compress and the knee 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 knee 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 knee 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 knee joint three sessions daily for five minutes. The goal is to flex the knee so that the tip of the hock (heel) will touch the rump and then straighten the knee out completely. This step helps to break down adhesions and scar tissue so that your pet will attain normal or near normal

range of motion. Also, flex and extend the hip and the ankle joints. Massage the muscles of the thigh and especially work on the muscles on the front of the thigh, because these may develop cramps (trigger points). This can be done after the passive range of motion session.

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

3. Day 14 to the 8th week postop: Continue range of motion exercises, as described above 5 minutes (or about 20 repetitions) for 6 weeks. Continue to Keep your pet in a confined area as above. If possible, encourage your pet to walk by having your pet follow a toy attached to a string. We also recommend rehabilitation therapy at a rehabilitation center of your choice, which can start in 2 weeks after surgery. NOTE: some cats will not tolerate rehabilitation therapy by a professional.

4. Week 9 to 12 postop: Range of motion exercises can be discontinued. Your pet may be allowed to roam in the house. Do not allow your him outdoors. Climbing stairs and jumping on elevated surfaces (2 feet or less) is permitted.

Incision: Daily, check the incision for signs of infection: redness, swelling, pain or discharge. Swelling of the lower part of the limb (hock) is common and will resolve within 7 to 10 days. Do not allow licking of the incision as this could cause an infection or open the incision. An Elizabethan collar should be kept on your companion for 2 weeks after surgery to prevent licking of the incision. If present, the yellow bandage covering the incision should be removed 1 day after surgery.

#### **Follow-up examinations:**

1. Please make an appointment for a recheck in 2 weeks for an evaluation of the operated limb with Dr. &&DVMATTLN or at &&RDVMCLINICNAME.
2. A final evaluation should be done in 8 weeks with Dr. &&DVMATTLN to check the healing process.

**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.

**Long-term management of osteoarthritis:** All cats that have a cruciate ligament rupture have or will develop some degree of osteoarthritis in the operated knee. Some cats may need to have additional treatments for osteoarthritis. Recommendations to control signs of osteoarthritis may include:

1. Weight management: Your companion should be maintained in trim body condition for the remainder of his/her life.
2. For now continue on your pet's regular diet, but a prescription diet may be needed if residual lameness is present. Diet with high levels of omega fatty acids: Hill's J/d diet or other similar prescription diet may be recommended if signs of arthritis are noted after the healing period is complete. It is important to wean your pet onto this diet over a period of 2 weeks to prevent excess flatulence and/or diarrhea.

Note: if your companion has food allergies do not change the to this diet without prior consultation by your primary care veterinarian. Another option is to add omega fatty acids to your companion's existing food in the form of Welactin. Please obtain this supplement from your primary care veterinarian.

- 3. Nutraceuticals: Dasuquin is a high quality, very pure form of chondroitin sulfate and glucosamine that is readily absorbed by the intestines in cats. In addition, it contains avocado/soybean unsaponifiables (ASU), which are natural anti-oxidants that help alleviate signs of arthritis. Please obtain this supplement from your primary care veterinarian.
- 4. If your pet has persistent lameness beyond 4 months after surgery, your pet should be seen by one of our orthopedic surgeons.

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**Medications:** A pain management protocol has been prescribed which should be effective. Cat's do not show pain, as is seen in dogs. Pain in cats may be shown by a cat having a grimace expression on the face, hiding, lacking social interaction with other pets or people, or may growl and hiss.

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