

CRUCIATE REPAIR

Post-operative management

Your dog has had a cruciate ligament injury repaired and other remedial surgery performed. This is a major operation and the following guidelines are to help your dog recovery as quickly as possible from this operation.

Pain Relief

Pain killing drugs have been given prior to the operation and during the period of hospitalisation to help minimize discomfort. You have been prescribed some medication to continue the analgesia at home. There may be more than one medication for this. Please give the medication as directed on the bottle label.

Antibiotics

Your dog will have had antibiotics at the time of surgery. In most cases this is sufficient, but there are occasions when an on-going course of antibiotics is required. If they are prescribed, please give as directed.

Bandages and Dressings

Usually your dog will have an adhesive dressing applied to the area of the wound to provide some local protection. This may well come off very quickly...they are not really designed to adhere to a dog's hairy skin. Do not worry if this happens.

It is unusual now for us to apply a larger padded dressing as they can be difficult to manage.

Chondroprotectives

The use of these supplements that aid in the healing of cartilage is strongly encouraged, **though we do not prescribe them routinely**. They can be given in three ways:

Cartrophen injection weekly for 4 weeks, started usually on the day of surgery. This is an effective and very straightforward way of giving a useful treatment.

Hills j/d diet or RCW Mobility diet. These have much to recommend them. They are diets specifically formulated to provide supplements that help in joint damage and arthritis. If we have advised on weight management for your dog, **Hills j/d low calorie** is probably the best diet to be feeding as it is consistent and very easy to ration. Our experience is that most dogs take to these foods very quickly. Our practice nurse can advise you on this and you can make an appointment to see them Monday to Friday at the Morley Hospital.

Oral supplements. These are of glucosamine HCl, and chondroitin. They are usually tablets which are given daily as a dietary supplement. **Synoflex** is available at the practice.

Physiotherapy

Physiotherapy is an important discipline in the rehabilitation of dogs from a variety of orthopaedic surgeries and will be an integral part of your dog's rehabilitation plan.

You should make an appointment **5- 10 days following surgery** with the physiotherapy team who will develop a program of exercises to encourage optimum recovery.

In the meantime there are a couple of things that you may find will help to reduce any swelling and associated discomfort in the leg.

Heat therapy. A "wheatie bag" is good way of applying heat to the operation site. The idea is to improve blood flow to the area to encourage healing processes. Use it for 10-15 minutes twice a day for the first 10 days

Massage. Gently squeezing and massaging the lower part of the leg will help reduce swelling and improve circulation.

Exercise

Please follow the physiotherapist's guidelines with regard to specific exercises but the following are general instructions.

For the first 3 weeks: Your dog should be strictly rested. **Do not** allow them to go up or down stairs and they should **not** be jumping on and off furniture. If you have slippery floors avoid walking them across this or provide non slip mats. Be prepared to support your dog with a towel under their abdomen as a sling if necessary. Take them out into the garden (**on a lead for energetic dogs**) for toileting during this time.

From 3 weeks onwards: Controlled outdoor exercise can begin at this stage. All outdoor activity should be on a lead. You should start at about **10 – 15 minutes twice a day** and build up over the weeks **to 20-30 minutes twice a day by the 6th week**. Sit/stand and step up exercises can be incorporated into the walks at this stage (discuss this with the vet when you have the stitches removed).

4-6 weeks: We need to check on your dog at this time. Your dog ought only to be mildly lame. We may need to re-X-ray the joint depending on the type of surgery that your dog has had.

6 weeks plus: Lead walking can **be increased by 10-15 minutes each week**. Walking up hills is good at this stage and "figure of 8" exercises 10 times on each walk will help improve co-ordination. Deep-water swimming is excellent therapy if it can be arranged.

By 12 weeks: Most patients will be back to near normal activity and we will hopefully be able to sign your pet off at this time.