

Cruciate Repair

Post-Operative Instructions



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Your pet has been through a major surgery. They will need special attention for a full, uneventful recovery, just as a human would. Please read and review the following instructions. If you have any questions at any time, please call.

Medications:

Give as directed upon discharge.

A mild sedative medication is available if desired to help with exercise restrictions.

Diet:

You can resume your pet's normal diet the night after their surgery. If they become sick to their stomach, discontinue food until the next morning. Feed 3/4 the normal amount (decrease intake by 25%) while under exercise restriction.

Exercise Restrictions and Rehabilitation:

For the first 8 weeks following the surgery strict confinement is required as outlined below. During this time, the bone is healing and adhering to restrictions is vital to avoiding complications.

1. If your pet is an outdoor dog, they will need to be kept inside for 8 weeks. Your pet should be separated from other dogs and not allowed to play.
2. Running, jumping, playing and stairs are not allowed. If your pet is walking on a slippery surface or uneven ground, a sling or belly-band should be used. When not under your direct supervision, confinement to a crate or airline carrier is required.
3. When taken outside your pet must be on a leash at all times. They are allowed to eliminate and then return indoors immediately for the first two weeks. No use of a doggie door or retractable leash. Stairs and ramps should be avoided whenever possible. When necessary, stairs should be done slowly and on a leash for 8 weeks.
4. Strict adherence to the above post-operative care is critical to your pet's recovery. If at any time you notice a problem, your pet cries out or you notice a set back in healing you should call for advice.
5. After the first 2 weeks post-operatively, leash walking is recommended. The dog should walk on a short lead in the heel position. Walk slowly to allow the dog to place weight on the foot with every step. Start with 5 minute leash walks several times daily. You can double the duration of the walks every 5-7 days as long as the pet remains comfortable.

Rehabilitation will begin around 8 to 12 weeks after surgery. The following recovery is advised.

1. The patient's activity is gradually increased to build muscle, increase mobility in the joint and strengthen bone healing. The degree of activity should progress with your pet remaining comfortable. Increasing the duration and not intensity of the activity is desired.
2. For the first few weeks, leash walks are advised. Walking is greatly encouraged, but on a short leash only. Continue to gradually increase the leash walking as during the initial rehab period. If your dog is doing well and shows no discomfort it is okay to increase the distance as they will tolerate it. If they are not more weak/painful at the end of the walk as compared to the beginning, the exercise is well-tolerated and can be continued and increased.
3. After 4-6 weeks of leash walks, you can allow your pet walks on a longer lead, such as 10-15 foot leash or a flexi lead. Decrease the number of walks at the same time.

4. At 4 months after surgery most restrictions can be removed and your pet can start off leash exercise. Heavy working and hunting can resume 6 months post-op. A final recheck exam is advised 4 months after surgery.

Passive Range of Motion (PRM):

PRM is putting the leg through the bicycle motion without a lot of strain on the leg while the patient is laying down. Begin PRM 5 days after surgery. Perform twice daily for 10 minutes or as long as the patient tolerates. Ice immediately after.

Each patient is an individual. These guidelines are general expectations, but your pet's recovery may take more time or less time. We will adjust the rehab depending upon how your pet responds. A successful extracapsular cruciate repair procedure will allow your dog to return to activity with significantly reduced residual lameness. If arthritis was present before surgery, some intermittent stiffness or lameness may be noted, particularly after heavy exercise, cold weather or upon rising.

Incision Care:

- DO NOT allow your pet to lick, chew, rub or pull at the incision. If they do, you must stop the behavior right away and begin using an Elizabethan collar. Licking is bad for the site and will prevent healing, or worse, cause the incision to open up and expose the surgery site to infection. If you do not have a collar at home, please pick one up from the clinic at the earliest ability.
- There will be bruising around the incision site and down the leg. It may become red or darken. This is normal and may increase up to 2 days post-surgery, and then slowly resolve.
- It is not unusual to have some swelling around the incision site. It should not be excessive or fluid filled. However, it is common to see swelling around the tarsus (the joint below the surgery) that develops 2 to 3 days post surgery. This may feel like Jell-O. This is edema and will resolve in 2 to 3 days.
- Icing is one of the most important things you can do to help your dog in the immediate postoperative period. It controls and decreases inflammation and will help to reduce post-operative pain. Please ice the knee 10 minutes on each side twice daily for 7 days. Ice packs can be made of ice cubes in a bag, frozen vegetables which can be re-frozen (if they don't become too thawed or mushy), or gel packs can be purchased from most local pharmacies.

Follow-Up:

Please schedule an appointment in 10-14 days for a progress exam and incision check. If everything is going well, there will be one more recheck at 4 months post-op before being released to normal exercise.

Recommendations/Monitoring:

Monitor your pet for no interest in food >24 hours, vomiting, diarrhea >3 episodes or if blood is present, lethargy, abdominal pain, or any new symptoms/concerns and have your pet evaluated with further concerns.

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to help in the care of your pet. Please call if you have any questions or concerns.

For after hours emergencies, contact the East Texas Pet Emergency Clinic at (903) 759-8545. They are located at 812 Gilmer Rd., Longview, TX 75604.