

Post Surgical Care of Cruciate Ligament Repair in the Cat

Home patient care after orthopedic surgery is critical to the success of the surgery. Allowing your pet too much activity may alter the anticipated outcome of the surgery. Remember, this surgery is a “repair technique” procedure designed to stabilize the knee joint although the joint will never be “good as new”, your pet will have full function of the leg.

Your pet has a light bandage covering the incision site called a Hypafix. This is meant to act as a barrier to keep the incision site clean from debris. The Hypafix placed by the TSVS team post operatively can stay on until suture/ staple removal and removed by your referring veterinarian at that time. However, if it becomes wet or dirty, it does need to be removed, so the incision site is not compromised. The Hypafix can be removed by your primary veterinarian's hospital staff. If the Hypafix comes off on its own prior to suture removal, that's OK! Please ensure the incision site is kept dry and free from debris until the sutures or staples are removed.

The following instructions will be your guide to home care:

(Note: once your cat is walking normally, no matter how soon after surgery, you may stop all rehabilitation exercises but continue exercise restriction for a minimum of six weeks to allow full healing of soft tissues.)

Week 1:

1. Provide pain management with pain meds the first five days
2. Apply an ice-pack to the knee for 10 to 15 minutes two to four times a day for the first 24 to 36 hours after surgery.
Please go to www.tsvs.net/videos for better understanding of ice therapy application.
3. If inflammation has resolved after 72 hours, apply a hot-pack to the knee for 10 to 15 minutes two or three times a day
4. Perform passive range of motion exercise (gently flex and extend the hip); 20 to 30 times, slow repetitions three times a day. **Please go to www.tsvs.net/videos for video example on passive range of motion exercise.**
5. Keep confined to a small area of the home where jumping and running is not possible (small bathroom, laundry room, large cage)

Weeks 2 - 4:

1. Apply a hot pack to the knee for 10 to 15 minutes two or three times a day until the swelling has resolved
2. Stop passive range of motion exercise if your pet is using the leg correctly
3. Schedule a recheck with your doctor ten days after surgery to remove any sutures and evaluate range of motion and percent weight bearing
4. Most patients begin to bear some weight by week 2, but every pet is different and some may take longer
5. You can allow your cat to move about the house **under supervision**, otherwise keep confined when you are not at home to discourage jumping and playing.
6. If your cats limping or pain appears to worsen after running out of pain medication, please call and request a refill for as long as it continues to help.

Weeks 5 - 6:

1. Schedule another recheck with your doctor six weeks after surgery to evaluate your pet's progress
2. If your cat is using the leg well, no further restrictions are necessary.

Additional Instructions:

1. Licking at the incision should be discouraged because it may lead to chewing at the sutures or staples causing a wound infection. It may be necessary to bandage the leg or use an Elizabethan collar to prevent licking.
2. Feed your cat its regular diet but reduce it by 10% to allow for reduced activity.
3. Mild swelling may occur near incision or low on limbs. Your veterinarian should check moderate or severe swelling immediately.

Complications

As with any surgical procedure, complications can occur. Unlike human patients who can use a sling or crutches, our patients do not know enough to stay off a healing leg so restricted activity is a major responsibility of you, the pet owner. Failure to follow these instructions carefully can lead to delayed healing.

The most common complication is delayed healing, where, despite our best efforts individual patients respond slower than others. Rarely, infections can develop and will need to be treated with antibiotics. Notify your veterinarian if you notice any discharge from the incision. If you have any questions, please feel free to ask your veterinarian or call me at the number above.

Follow Up Instructions:

Please monitor your pet's ability to urinate over the next 1-2 days. Rarely, patients that had an epidural will have transient urinary retention, straining to urinate but no stream is observed. This can lead to a ruptured bladder after several days and kidney failure if you do not seek immediate treatment.

- Recheck in 14 days: Staples removal
- Recheck every 2 weeks after suture removal to evaluate progress
- Hypafix bandage can be left on until it falls off or at suture removal

- Start antibiotic tonight
- Start pain medication tonight
- Injected Nocita (extended-release 72 hr local anesthetic) throughout the tissues surrounding the surgical site during closure of fascial and subcutaneous layers. Please do not use therapeutic laser around the incision for first 72 hours after surgery. After this point, the use of therapeutic laser at the surgical site is permitted and encouraged based on rDVM recommendations.
- Start Dasuquin, Cosequin, Phy-Cox-JS or Glycoflex (joint supplement) ASAP
- Start essential fatty acid supplement, ie. Derm Caps to reduce joint inflammation ASAP
- Recommend consultation with the following rehabilitation service or centers:
 - **Kim Barrier, CCRVN** (kim@tsvs.net), Texas Specialty Veterinary Services – Mobile Rehabilitation & Conditioning. Please contact **(800) 707-0167**
 - For Underwater Treadmill therapy please contact Allure Integrated Pet Specialist (210) 874-2727

Please go to www.tsvs.net/videos for educational videos that will aide in rehabilitation therapy for your pet during recovery process.

Please send a copy of this form home with the owner!