

Post Surgical Care of TPLO (Tibial Plateau Leveling Osteotomy) and Patella Luxation Repair

AN E-COLLAR IS MANDATORY FOR 14 DAYS TO PROTECT SKIN INCISION. YOUR PET SHOULD BE MAINTAINED ON LEASH ACTIVITY AND CRATE/CAGE CONFINEMENT FOR MINIMUM OF 8 WEEKS. PLEASE FOLLOW ENTIRE SET OF DISCHARGE INSTRUCTIONS.

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, a ruptured ligament is a severe orthopedic injury and although surgery is necessary to reduce future arthritis and minimize pain and healing time, the joint will never be "good as new."

It is very important that your pet not be allowed to run, jump or play until healing of the osteotomy is confirmed by radiographs (8 weeks). Your pet should not be allowed outside except under the control of a leash. Excessive activity can cause pain and in worst case scenarios, complications that could lead to the leg being worse than before surgery.

The main goals the first days after surgery include the following:

- Swelling and edema control
- Improving Range of Motion (ROM) of the affected joints
- Limiting muscle atrophy
- Pain control

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.

If you purchased a Lick Sleeve for your pet to wear following surgery, please read the information and instructions below:

1. The Lick Sleeve does not take the place of an Elizabethan collar, or "e-collar". When you are not with your pet, the e-collar needs to be put on.

2. If the Lick Sleeve gets wet or soiled, it needs to be removed, washed, and dried before putting it back on. During this process, the e-collar needs to be kept on your pet until the Lick Sleeve is cleaned, dry, and reapplied.

3. We recommend keeping the Lick Sleeve on the pet for an additional 48 hours after the sutures/staples are removed.

We have included some helpful videos about the Lick Sleeve:

- Lick Sleeve Instructional Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tgBxqrWvjI4>
- How to Apply the Lick Sleeve on the Rear
Leg: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nf7BChpFfgw>
- How to Apply the Lick Sleeve on the Front
Leg: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UP46TxwKONI>
- Make Dog Urination Instructions with a Lick Sleeve: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rwtBsKoe86M>

The following instructions will be your guide to home care.

Week 1:

1. Provide pain management with NSAIDs the first 10-14 days unless your pet was pretreated with Prednisolone (cortisone) in which case we need to wait three days.
2. Apply a cold-pack to the stifle for 10 to 15 minutes two to four times a day for the first 24 to 36 hours after surgery if no bandage.
Please go to www.tsvs.net/videos for better understanding of ice therapy application.
3. If inflammation has resolved after 72 hours, apply a warm-pack to the stifle for 10 to 15 minutes two or three times a day if no bandage
4. **Perform passive range of motion exercise (gently flex and extend the knee); 10 slow repetitions three times a day. Please go to www.tsvs.net/videos for video example on passive range of motion exercises.**
5. Precede and follow (before and after) the passive range of motion exercise with massage of the quadriceps muscles (large muscles above the kneecap).
Please go to www.tsvs.net/videos for video example of massage therapy.
6. Begin slow leash walks of less than 5 to 10 minutes three times a day

Weeks 2 & 3:

1. Apply a warm pack to the stifle for 10 to 15 minutes two or three times a day until the swelling has resolved
2. If your pet's 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.
3. Stop passive range of motion exercise if your pet is using the leg correctly
4. Increase the slow leash walks to 10 to 20 minutes three times a day
5. Continue massage and refill pain meds if stopping caused more limping. **See www.tsvs.net/videos for massage therapy example video.**

6. Schedule a recheck with your doctor ten days after surgery to remove any sutures and evaluate range of motion, limb girth, and percent weight bearing
7. Most patients begin to bear some weight by week 2, but every pet is different and some may take longer

Weeks 4 & 5:

1. Increase the slow leash walks to 20 to 30 minutes two or three times daily
2. Have your pet perform 10 repetitions of sit-stand exercises three times a day
3. Have your pet perform 10 to 15 repetitions of figure-of-eight walks two or three times a day, circling to the right and left
4. Have your pet sit and stand for 10 to 15 repetitions two or three times a day, standing sideways against a wall keeping the affected knee next to the wall so he/she cannot rock their weight off the leg
5. If available, swimming exercises for one to three minutes twice a day is helpful
6. Most pets will be putting decent weight on the legs at this point in time on a slow walk but have a noticeable limp
7. The most important thing is to have observable improvement every two weeks at this point

Weeks 6 - 8:

1. Schedule another re-check with your doctor 8 weeks after surgery to evaluate your pet's progress and to repeat radiographs to evaluate for complete healing of the bone.
2. Take your pet on leash walks for 30 to 40 minutes once a day, slow enough to ensure that your pet is weight bearing on the affected limb
3. Take your pet on incline walks or hills or ramps for 5 to 10 minutes once or twice a day
4. Take your pet up a flight of stairs, if available, 5 to 10 times slowly twice a day
5. Continue swimming if possible

Weeks 9 - 12:

At this point, your pet's healing should be complete and should gradually return to full activity by the end of 12 weeks.

1. Take your pet on faster 30 to 40 minute walks once or twice a day
2. Take your pet for a run-straight only, no turns-for 10 to 15 minutes twice a day

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. Bandages, if used, should always be kept dry and clean. Any odors and/or persistent licking are indicators that there may be a potential problem and

should be checked by your veterinarian immediately. Bandages and splints should be checked weekly by your veterinarian or veterinary technician.

3. Feed your pet its regular diet but reduce it by 10% to allow for reduced activity.
4. Mild swelling may occur near incision or low on limbs. Your veterinarian should check moderate or severe swelling immediately.
5. Use of a joint protective supplement with glucosamine and chondroitin is highly recommended for at least six months if your pet does not have arthritis. If your pet does have arthritis, it is recommended to use this supplement for the life of your pet. Although there are over twenty brands of this nutraceutical, Dasuquin, Cosequin, Duralactin are good supplements to consider. Other systemic forms of anti-inflammatory medications to consider are Adequan (you may contact your veterinarian if interested).

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 ligament so restricted activity is a major responsibility of you, the pet owner. Failure to follow these instructions carefully can lead to delayed healing or even failure of the new artificial ligament.

The most common complication is delayed healing, where, despite our best efforts to stabilize the joint, individual patients respond slower than others. Occasionally, your pet may develop a small pocket of fluid called a seroma, around the metal implant for the tibial osteotomy cut. See your veterinarian if this swelling is larger than a grape. If your pet is not using the leg somewhat by three weeks, please call Dr. Harper to set up a recheck. Additionally, if your pet starts using the leg and then stops using the leg or stops improving week by week or worsens week by week, call Dr. Harper to set up a recheck.

If you have any questions, please feel free to ask your veterinarian.

Follow Up Instructions:

- Support/pressure bandage placed post-operatively to be removed in _____ hours / days
- 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. **(This is only if your pet received an epidural)**
- Recheck in 14 days: Sutures
- We would highly recommend you purchasing a harness to aide in your pet getting up from laying down and using both hind limbs comfortably. The product that we hear the most success stories is called – Help me up Harness (www.helpmeup.com).
- Please return to pet to for recheck radiographs (xrays) to be taken at 8 weeks following original surgery date.**
- Feed your pet its regular diet but reduce it by 10% to allow for reduced activity.
- Any swelling or redness near the incision should be checked immediately.

- Recheck every 2 weeks after suture removal to evaluate progress
- Start Clavamox every 12 hours tonight and give for 7 days UNLESS he/she was given a dose of Convenia (injectable antibiotic was given at the time of surgery which last for two weeks).
- Start carprofen pain medication tonight and give for 14 days (refill if limp worsens after running out for as long as it is helping)
- Start Gabapentin 10mg/kg BID and/or Tramadol 3-5 mg/kg TID pain medication tonight and give for 14 days (refill if limp worsens after running out for as long as it is helping)
- Injected Nocita (extended-release 72 hr local anesthetic) throughout the tissues surrounding the surgical site during closure of fascial and subcutaneous layers. The use of therapeutic laser at the surgical site is permitted and encouraged based on rDVM recommendations.
- Start essential fatty acid supplement, ie. Derm Caps to reduce joint inflammation ASAP for same amount of time as joint supplement
- Weight loss is very important for healing and to minimize risk of rupturing other leg (40-60% chance in all dogs and 75% chance in overweight dogs)
- Start Cosequin, Dasuquin MSM or Duralactin (joint supplement) tomorrow or speak with your veterinarian about Adequan injections
- 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
- If you want to do comprehensive physical therapy at home on your own, please visit www.tploguide.com and purchase a step by step guide to post-surgical home therapy for pet owners titled TPLO (Tibial Plateau Leveling Osteotomy).

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!