

CRUCIATE SURGERY POST-OP CARE SHEET – TTA TECHNIQUE

Information:-

Your pet's cranial cruciate ligament failure has been treated surgically using the Tibial Tuberosity Advancement (TTA) technique. The operation works by redirecting the force generated by the large quadriceps muscles to compensate for the failed cruciate ligament. This is achieved by cutting free, and moving forward, the part of the tibia (the tibial tuberosity) attached to the quadriceps muscle. The bone cut is called an osteotomy and the osteotomy is stabilised using titanium orthopaedic implants. The titanium promotes remarkably rapid bone ingrowth and healing and this is key to the reduced convalescence and minimal pain seen with TTA surgery.

Successful recovery after knee surgery, no matter which procedure has been used, requires a period of controlled activity. Compared to other procedures, TTA causes less discomfort and while a comfortable, pain-free patient is obviously a good thing, many dogs are tempted to use the operated leg too much, too soon. No matter how comfortable and confident your pet is feeling in the days after their TTA operation, **it is absolutely essential that running, jumping, and general "rough and tumble" with other pets is avoided for the first 6 weeks or so.** The bone must be given time to heal adequately and too much strain placed on the osteotomy too early can result in stress fracture or implant failure and while this is rarely catastrophic, the ensuing complication may be painful and will certainly delay the recovery.

First and Second Weeks

Your dog will have a short course of paracetamol / codeine and a longer course of a non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug (NSAID). Treatment with NSAIDs will usually continue for at least six weeks the osteotomy heals.

Bandages are not used following TTA because it is important that your pet is able to flex and extend the operated knee freely right from day one.

A gauze dressing may be placed over the skin incision to protect the wound. The dressing can be removed after five days or so – we will usually do this for you. No external skin sutures are placed.



During the first 14 days, your dog should be encouraged to take short lead walks – 5-10 minutes three to four times daily is a good starting point. It is important that the operated knee joint is returned to use as quickly as possible – concentrate on walking relatively slowly as this will encourage the patient to use the leg. Ideally, your dog should go outside ON A LEAD to toilet during the first two weeks after surgery.

No other exercise is recommended for the first 14 days – it is important to not let your pet loose to run freely in the house, particularly up and down stairs. Do not swim the dog. Please remember that the bone has been ‘broken’ and it now has to repair.

A cold compress (e.g. iced bag of peas) should be applied to the surgery site for 5-10 minutes, three times a day, for the first 3-4 days. This will help reduce swelling and bruising. Please wrap the pack in a tea towel or similar to protect the skin. A soft, fluidy swelling running from the incision down to the hock (ankle) is not uncommon and will settle within a week or so on its own.

Hydrotherapy may start at the 2-3 week mark after stitches have been removed and the wound has fully healed. This should be controlled, with particular care taken at entry and exit from the pool. Please speak to us about recommended centres for hydrotherapy.

Third and Fourth Weeks

The amount of activity can now be gradually increased but it is essential that your dog is not allowed off the lead until after the 4-week check.

Lead walks can be longer and faster though take care to ensure that he/she continues to use the operated limb confidently at every step.

Fifth Week onwards

Dependent on healing, we sometimes schedule check X-rays for the end of week four if we feel the need to confirm that the osteotomy is healing well. Bear in mind that although bone healing and remodelling will be progressing nicely, full strength will not be established for several more weeks.

At this stage, your dog will be capable of frequent lengthy (30 minutes or more) lead walks and we will soon be introducing some free running activity.

The key to success is a programme of gradually increasing activity.

At first, come off the lead towards the end of the last walk of the day – choose a quiet area with a good surface - **five minutes is enough for the first day off the lead.**

Subsequently, the amount of free running play and exercise can be increased gradually back towards normal pre-injury levels. Most dogs will be capable of full, unrestricted athletic activity within 12 weeks of their TTA operation. Some residual low-grade stiffness and lameness may still be seen at twelve weeks, but this will resolve completely over the subsequent month or two as your dog regains full fitness and the osteotomy completes its healing process.

Please ask Dan if you have any queries about anything to do with your pet’s procedure and post-op care.