

Discharge Appointment FAQs

Q: Does my pet need to be confined after surgery?

A: Yes. Depending on what is most comfortable, we recommend either a crate or small area of the house with no access to stairs or furniture. Because your pet will likely need to wear an Elizabethan collar for 10-14 days after surgery, make sure the crate is large enough to accommodate this. If possible, confine your pet prior to surgery to judge his or her tolerance level and acclimate him or her to the confined area.

Q: What should I keep in mind in choosing an area to confine my pet?

A: It's best to avoid slippery surfaces. If your house does not have a carpeted area, we recommend laying down a rug with rubber backing or rubber mats to create traction. Areas near doors or places where your pet may be exposed to external stimulation are less ideal. Your pet should feel calm and comfortable to limit the possibility of re-injury.

Q: How do I assist my pet out of the car?

A: If possible, please lift your pet by placing an arm under the neck and chest and the other under the abdomen. Do not allow your pet to jump in and out of vehicles at any point during recovery. When lifting is not an option, a ramp may be helpful. A sling can be placed under the chest for a forelimb surgery or under the abdomen for a hind limb surgery to completely support the weight.

Q: When can we expect weight bearing?

A: It is not uncommon for dogs to carry the limb following surgery. As your pet becomes more comfortable on the limb, he or she will bear more weight. Every surgery varies.

Q: Can my pet climb the stairs at home?

A: Initially, it's best to limit to only those stairs absolutely necessary to get in and out of the house. We recommend carrying or supporting your pet with a sling to perform stairs, cross slippery surfaces and walk on uneven ground.

Q: I don't have a sling. Can I use something in place of it?

A: Yes. A bath or beach towel will work, too. We also recommend cutting the sides of an eco-friendly grocery bag to create a sling. For small pets, a bathrobe tie may work, since it's not necessary to lift the full weight, but rather

use it as a support mechanism to prevent slipping and falling.

Q: Is it okay to lay on the surgical limb?

A: Yes, any position is okay as long as your pet is comfortable. It is safe to lay, stand and sit on the surgical limb. Your pet should avoid impact: running, jumping, playing, and climbing up and down on furniture. We suggest blocking access to stairs as well.

Q: When can I stop giving tramadol?

A: Typically after five to seven days, depending on the comfort level. We recommend giving it for the first 48 to 72 hours at the higher dosage and wean off it from there. Once your pet is completely comfortable, discontinue it. Physical signs of discomfort include limb shaking, heavy panting and restlessness.

Q: What can we do about the redness and bruising around the incision on the surgical limb? What is this caused from?

A: Check with a doctor if there is excessive redness/bruising around the incision to verify if this is normal. It's best to email a picture of the area to the surgeon, who can get a visual and better recommend if your pet needs to be seen. An examination will help determine if it is related to the incision or razor rash/bruising from shaving.

Q: If I cannot afford Dasuquin, what other supplement can my pet take? What dosage should it be?

A: We recommend Dasuquin. Extensive clinical research suggests that it is more pure than other products on the market. Consult with your surgeon or primary veterinarian for additional suggestions.

Q: For a TPO, is the hardware permanent?

A: Yes. Implants are intended to be permanent unless directed otherwise by a surgeon.

Q: How long with the self-adhesive bandage stay on?

A: Depending on placement, it can stay on for a few days and not be replaced, cleaned or applied topicals. However, it should be removed immediately if it starts to peel off or get wet, cause your pet discomfort, or ooze a clear, blood-tinged discharge. Signs of infection include redness, swelling, odor, thick discharge and warmth to the touch.

Q: Why can't I clean the incision or apply topicals?

A: We do not want to allow any moisture into the incision area. When applied, topicals sometimes bring more attention to the area and make your pet more inclined to lick and chew at the incision.

Q: What should I do if there is discharge? How much discharge is normal?

A: The first evening at home, a small amount of clear, blood-tinged discharge is normal. It depends on the surgery. If discharge continues overnight and into the next day, please contact a doctor for further assistance.

Q: How important is rehab therapy?

A: We recommend rehabilitation therapy for all surgeries, but it is mandatory following radiofrequency treatment with hobbles. It has been proven to increase range of motion, decrease post-operative swelling and inflammation, build muscle mass, and improve overall comfort. We also provide at-home exercises for most surgeries.

Q: Does the same doctor handle rechecks?

A: Recheck appointments are typically facilitated by the rehabilitation department. You will meet with a rehabilitation therapist, who will then take your pet back for radiographs (if applicable). A doctor will evaluate/palpate the injured area and review the radiographs (if applicable). The rehabilitation therapist will update you with the doctor's recommendations and additional at-home exercises. You can schedule your recheck with the surgeon for an additional fee.

Q: When can I stop cold compressing after PROM?

A: Depending on how swollen the surgery leg is, it can range from 2-4 weeks.

Q: What happens if we wait more than 14 days to remove sutures?

A: When left in for an extended period of time, staples and sutures can become embedded into the skin. They can also become more difficult to remove, which is uncomfortable for your pet. We recommend suture/staple removal between 10 and 14 days. Chemotherapy patients, however, should wait 14 to 21 days per doctor recommendation.