

London Veterinary Services

— in-house surgical referrals —

IMPORTANT DISCHARGE INSTRUCTIONS: Please read this form carefully when you get home.

We have performed elbow arthroscopy to diagnose and treat one of the components of elbow dysplasia (abnormal development of the elbow joint, leading to disorders of the cartilage and underlying bone). Minimally-invasive procedures have been used to examine the elbow joint and removed some abnormal bone and cartilage from the coronoid process. In order to allow healing in and around the joint, we must be vigilant to only permit the lowest impact exercise for 12 weeks after surgery. Please follow the instructions below very carefully:

- o The only exercise permitted during the first 12 weeks of healing is very slow lead toilet walks (up to 10 minutes 3-4 times daily for weeks 1-3, increasing to 15-20 minutes 3-4 times daily for weeks 4-12).
- o Avoid trotting which exposes the elbow joints to double the intensity and frequency of forces compared to slow walking.
- o Running and jumping will increase the forces acting on the elbow joints by 5-10 times, and should always be avoided for the first 12 weeks.
- o Avoid slippery surfaces and stairs which can cause severe stress to joints.
- o For most dogs, the only way to avoid the above types of exercise is to use a pen or small room confinement. Please ask the nursing staff about the best options.
- o Comfort levels should be good straight away and the leg(s) should be used consistently straight after surgery. Most dogs will feel good enough to exercise, and it is the owners' responsibility to prevent them doing so.
- o It is also very important that the suture line is protected from self-trauma. Please use the E-collar whenever you are not around to supervise, or until your surgeon has advised you that it is safe to remove it (generally after the skin

sutures have been removed). Remember, it can only take a single lick to cause a problematic infection. Any surgical skin wounds should be clean, dry and free from any noxious odours. Please call us if you have any concerns regarding the appearance of the skin wounds.

o Please use the dispensed painkiller as instructed on the labels. Side effects are unusual but include general malaise, vomiting, or diarrhoea. Please call us if you notice any of these problems or if you think you may have accidentally given the wrong dose.

o Hydrotherapy can be started 4 weeks after surgery and physiotherapy 2 weeks after surgery which will speed recovery and improve limb use and range of motion after surgery.

o We expect all animals to urinate within 24-48 hours of going home, and to defaecate within 4-5 days. If this does not happen, or you notice straining without passing of anything, please phone us for advice.

o The initial reassessment to check limb function is performed in 7 day's time. If you have any worries at all regarding instructions for exercise restriction, medications, limb function, or the ongoing plan, please call us. We will give you some advice over the phone, and sometimes organise an early re-check.

o Elbow Dysplasia is never 'cured', once the cartilage is damaged there will be a slow progression of osteoarthritis. We aim to improve the long-term limb function of the patient. Surgical management has better outcomes than medical management in appropriate cases, however some dogs will not improve and lameness may progress in some. There may be incidences of lameness that may wax and wane in the future and rest and analgesia for 24-48hrs at these times is recommended.

Visit us: londonveterinaryservices.co.uk

Passionate about Surgery. Compassionate about Pets.