

Post-Surgical FHO (Femoral Head Ostectomy) Home Care Guidelines

Recovery App: rrvss.bp.vet

A femoral head and neck ostectomy (FHO) surgery was performed to treat a chronic coxofemoral luxation. The femoral head and neck were removed to allow for more pain free function. Satisfactory recovery from surgery and return to function depends largely on the quality of home care. These instructions are guidelines to help maximize recovery and minimize complications.

IMPORTANT: Animals frequently feel better long before they are healed. Your dog does not understand the nature of their surgery, and will want to become very active shortly after the procedure is performed.

Restriction of activity is extremely important. The recovery period will last for **a minimum of the 4-6 weeks.**

This generally means confinement to a crate/cage/small room, no jumping, no running, no stairs, and no playing with other dogs until recovery is well advanced. When taken outdoors to urinate or defecate, your dog **MUST** be on a short (<6 feet) leash. This degree of confinement must be continued for the entire recovery period (minimum of 4-6 weeks) except when performing the activities described for rehabilitation.

- Your dog can be inside, on carpeted surfaces, under your direct supervision. Running, jumping, bounding and playing are not allowed (if there are other dogs in the household, you will need to keep them separated).
- Your dog must be on a leash at all times when outside. Your dog should go for short walks on leash to their comfort level. Please see rehabilitation guidelines for the timeline.
- When not under direct supervision, your dog is to be confined.

If at any time during recovery and healing a set-back or decrease in function is noted, contact your veterinarian. Excessive activity may result in re-injury and/or complications that jeopardize a successful outcome and could result in additional surgery that will lead to additional discomfort for your dog and additional cost to you.

PROGNOSIS:

The prognosis for healing and function is considered fair to good. Return to peak function is gradual and expected 1-2 months following surgery. Rehabilitation will greatly increase the rate and quality of recovery.

WHAT TO EXPECT AFTER GOING HOME:

After surgery dogs are typically non-weight bearing to toe-touching lame for the first few days. Shortly thereafter dogs will begin to bear weight with an obvious lameness. When walking they will use the limb but they will often hold the leg up when standing. Swelling and bruising in the surgical leg is common but should remain mild and resolve within 7-10 days. Within two to three weeks they are using the leg consistently. By the six week recheck and radiographs most dogs are healed and may begin a gradual return to normal activity.

INCISIONS: An incision was made adjacent to the hip. Please evaluate the incisions once daily for signs of infection including progressive redness, swelling, oozing, heat, pain and/or separation of the skin edges. Early detection and treatment of infection can markedly improve outcome if complications develop. If signs of infection are noted, please contact your veterinarian immediately. No external sutures were placed. Your pet may be sent home with a small protective covering that may be removed after 24 hours unless it falls off before then. The purpose of this is to cover the wound until the body has had a chance to form its own seal.

Your dog will be provided with an E-Collar and/or Lick Sleeve which should be worn until the 2 week re-check appointment. Preventing licking is critical to reduce the risk of surgical site infection and surgical wound dehiscence. Please do not hesitate to call if you need any help adjusting or maintaining the e-collar. **It is critical that your dog is not able to lick the incision.**

POTENTIAL COMPLICATIONS:

Potential complications associated with FHO surgery include but are not limited to infection (including antibiotic resistant infection), swelling and bruising, hematoma formation, continued lameness of the hip joint. Complications may require additional testing and medication and in rare cases additional surgery to correct and may be associated with additional costs

REHABILITATION AT HOME:

Rehabilitation begins soon after your dog's surgery. Over the course of months your dog's activity will be allowed to gradually increase to build muscle mass, improve flexibility and enhance bone healing while minimizing complications. The degree of activity should progress with your pet remaining comfortable. The primary goal is increasing duration and minimizing intensity so REMEMBER explosive activities such as running, jumping or playing with other dogs are not allowed during the critical first 4-6 weeks recovery following surgery.

The goals of these rehabilitation guidelines are to improve your dog's comfort, increase the mobility of the operated limb, and speed up the rate of recovery.

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- Passive range of motion exercises 2-3 times daily will decrease tissue contraction and aid in healing.
- Ice packs can be applied to reduce swelling in the post-operative period.
- Short leash walks are encouraged to your dog's comfort level; walks should increase in frequency and duration along with your dog's comfort level.

To help with this recovery, we've created an app that outlines this timeline and can answer many of your questions throughout the process! Enter this URL into your browser and it will take you to the link to download the app:

rrvss.bp.vet

Please do not hesitate to call with any additional questions or concerns. Thank you for allowing us to care for your dog.

Thank you for choosing Russian River Veterinary Surgical Service

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