

The Stages of Second Intention Wound Healing for Pets



Some wounds are left open to heal from the inside out. This process takes longer than surgical healing but can be very effective for certain types of injuries.



1 Days 1–3 Inflammatory Phase



- The wound may look red, swollen, or moist.
- Some bleeding or discharge may be present.
- This is a normal part of cleaning out damaged tissue and bacteria.



What to do:

Keep the area clean and dry. Prevent licking or chewing. Rest and limited activity are key. Follow your veterinarian's instructions for bandage changes if needed.

2 Days 4–7 Granulation Phase



- New pink or red tissue (granulation tissue) forms in the wound bed.
- The wound may look “bumpy” and moist.
- Discharge may decrease.



What to do:

Continue to keep the wound clean. Bandage changes as directed. Prevent licking or chewing. Good nutrition supports healing.

3 Weeks 1–3 Epithelialization Phase



- The wound edges start to contract and new skin cells grow across the surface.
- The wound will appear smaller each day.
- Less discharge is usually present.



What to do:

Continue wound care as instructed. Keep the area clean and protected. Prevent licking or chewing. Recheck exams help ensure proper healing.

4 Weeks 3–6 Contraction & Maturation Phase



- The wound continues to contract and becomes shallower.
- The tissue gets stronger and less sensitive.
- Hair may start to grow around the area.



What to do:

Continue care as directed until fully healed. Most pets can gradually return to normal activities as advised by your veterinarian.

5 Weeks 6+ Remodeling Phase



- The tissue remodels and strengthens.
- The scar becomes less noticeable over time.
- Full healing may take several weeks to months.



What to do:

Continue a healthy diet and monitor the area. Protect from injury. Scar appearance will improve over time.



REMEMBER

Healing takes time and every pet heals differently. If you notice increased redness, swelling, odor, discharge, or pain—contact your veterinarian.

