

## Arthrodesis Aftercare Information

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Surgery Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Surgery Performed: Repair of \_\_\_\_\_

**Convalescent period:** Your pet should be walking and touching the toes of the operated limb to the ground at a walk with the cast/splint in place within 7-10 days. From this point on, the use of the leg should improve and the degree of lameness should gradually resolve. If you notice that your pet worsens or loses the ability to use the limb at any time during recovery, please give us a call.

**Prognosis:** By 8-10 weeks after surgery most tendons have healed or joints have fused, and your pet should be using the limb very well. After healing takes place your pet should be able to walk almost normally again. During times of weather changes (cold or damp) or if out in the cold weather for a while, some pets will experience some discomfort noted as lameness in the leg.

### Medications:

- ( ) **Fentanyl patch** (sizes available include 12, 25, 50, 75, & 100 ug patches): This is a clear plastic patch applied to your pet's skin for relief of discomfort or pain control. You will be instructed on when to remove the patch from your pet's skin (usually the date it should be removed will be noted). In most pets, the effects of this patch will work for about 3-5 days total (average of 4 days). It can be disposed of in two ways only, either place the patch in a plastic bag and return it to the office that dispensed it to you for disposal, or fold it in half, and flush it down the toilet. Do not allow pets or people to lick, eat or chew the patch because this may result in intoxication. The effects of the patch take 12-24 hours to either start to work or for the effects of the patch to wear off. Other medications can be used with the patch in place if needed and instructions on adjusting doses should be provided for you.
- ( ) **Anti-inflammatory medications:** Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory (NSAID's) include Rimadyl (Novox, Carprofen), Deramaxx, Metacam, Previcox, and others are available in either Brand name or generic forms: (tablet sizes or liquid concentrations vary depending on the product): The dose will be given in terms of the number of tablet(s), partial tablet, or volume of liquid (in mL) needed to be administered by mouth and the frequency will be noted for you (either every 12 or 24 hours) for 10-14 days as needed for pain control. These medications reduce inflammation, pain, and swelling. Do not give any other medications (particularly NOT Aspirin or steroids) with this medicine unless instructed by a veterinarian. Stop administering this medication if you notice any vomiting, diarrhea, loss of appetite, or black tarry stool. The time of the next dose that this medication is due will be noted on your discharge instructions (\_\_\_\_\_ am/pm). Some doctors prefer that this medication is not started until your pet leaves the hospital and is eating more normally.
- ( ) **Pain relieving medications: Tramadol 50 mg:** The dose will be given in terms of the number of tablet(s) or partial tablet needed to be administered by mouth and the frequency will be noted for you (either every 8, or 12 hours) for 10-14 days as needed for pain control. This medication is an opioid and may cause sedation, mild constipation, or a decreased appetite. These side effects are related to the dose of the medication. Please call your doctor if you have concerns about any side effects. If a Fentanyl patch has been applied to your pet, this medication may not be needed until the patch has been removed, however it can be started with the Fentanyl patch at half the recommended dose (unless already at ¼ tablet dose) if needed. Please call if you have additional questions or concerns.
  - ( ) The first doses are due about 8-12 hours after removal of the Fentanyl patch
  - OR ( ) The time of the next dose that this medication is due will be noted on your discharge instructions (\_\_\_\_\_ am/pm).
- ( ) **Other: Antibiotics** may be administered if needed, depending on the case. The dose will be given in terms of the number of tablet(s)/capsule(s) needed to be administered by mouth and the frequency will

be noted for you (either every 12 or 24 hours) for the appropriate number of days. Antibiotics would be used to prevent infection or treat contamination noted at the time of surgery. Any antibiotic may cause nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea. Most side effects can be minimized by administering the medication with food. The time of the next dose that this medication is due will be noted on your discharge instructions (\_\_\_\_\_ am/pm).

Other:

**Exercise:** Limit activity to a large crate or a small room without furniture for 8-10 weeks (food and water can be left in these areas). Limit outdoor activity to very short leash walks for bowel and urinary purposes only for the next 8 weeks. Never leave your pet outside, or take your pet off the leash outside during the recovery period. Do not allow jumping, climbing stairs, or roughhousing with other pets or people for the full length of recovery. Strenuous activity can breakdown the surgical repair, cause pain, cause the incision to open, and prevent a successful recovery.

Short walks are permitted on a leash only (10 minutes maximum). Do not leave your pet off the leash or unattended outside during the time of exercise restriction.

**Incision:** The incision is covered by the bandage and will be checked by Dr. Hodge in about 2 weeks.

There are no external staples/sutures to be removed, but the incision should still be checked.

There are staples/sutures that need to be removed in about 10-14 days. This can be done with the first bandage change.

**BANDAGES, CASTS, AND SPLINTS** – Areas surrounding splints and bandages should be checked at home twice daily for irritation, swelling, odor, loosening, or wetness/dampness and reported if found. The toes at the end of the bandage may be seen and should be checked for swelling, color changes, or discharge. Swelling would be noted by a change in color of the toes (colors such as red, purple or black are not good colors and indicate immediate evaluation by a Veterinarian), discharge or wetness to the toes, or the toenails noted to be pointing away from each other (cowboy apart). Bandages, splints, and casts should be kept clean and dry by being wrapped in plastic before being taken outside (such as a plastic bag, an IV bag, Glad “press and seal” wrap over the bottom of the bandage with a secondary bag, or a commercial bootie or bandage cover which should have been sent home). The bandage should be kept uncovered at all other times. Please call if the bandage slips, gets wet, has a bad odor, the bandage seems painful, or if you have questions or concerns.

A bandage check/change will be recommended in 5-7 days or every 10-14 days

A bandage removal will be performed in about 6-8 weeks. The bandage may be removed in sections to allow a gradual increase in weight bearing.

Bandage changes will be needed every 10-14 days for about 8 weeks total.

**Physical Rehabilitation:**

We may recommend additional therapy once the splint/bandage is removed and the joint appears to be healing.

Other:

PLEASE RETURN your pet for  An incision check (suture/staple removal) is recommended in 10-14 days

A re-examination is recommended every 2 weeks.

A follow-up X-ray is recommended in 8 weeks.