

Elbow Aftercare Information

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Surgery Date: _____

Surgery Performed: Elbow surgery was performed on the () right () left

Reason: remove _____

- () Arthroscopy performed
- () Open arthrotomy (surgically open the joint)

Convalescent period: Most dogs start to use the operated limb within a few days following the muscle splitting technique performed to remove the cartilage flap. Your pet should be walking and touching the toes of the operated limb to the ground at a walk 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. The bandage we have applied should help support the limb during the first 10-14 days. By 4 weeks following surgery, most dogs are improved.

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 patchOR () 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 4-6 weeks to allow the soft tissues to heal (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 6 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 will initially be covered and will not be visualized daily. Please check the bandage daily for strike through (discharge) as this may indicate that it needs to be changed. Do not allow your pet to chew on the bandage. Once the bandage has been removed, please check the incision daily for signs of problems including: redness, swelling, pain, discharge, loss of sutures, or opening of the incision. Please call our office if you have concerns about the incision. Do not allow your pet to lick at the incision or bandage. Please use the Elizabethan collar from us, your regular veterinarian, or a pet supply store to prevent licking or chewing at the incision or bandage. Another option is to apply bitter apple solution to the skin around the incision several times a day to prevent licking. Your pet should return to Dr. Hodge in about 2 weeks to check the incision.

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.

BANDAGES – 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 10-14 days.

Physical Rehabilitation: Physical therapy is recommended for optimal results.

- Initial therapy: Some swelling and bruising is expected to occur after surgery which may be noted about 2-3 days after surgery, and it may take about 5-7 days for the swelling to fully resolve. You can help minimize swelling in the leg by applying a cold compresses to the incision site (leg) for the first few days. Place a cold pack on the leg 2-3 times daily for 10-15 minute sessions for the first 3 days after surgery if able. A plastic bag of frozen vegetables makes a good cold pack. On day 4, we recommend changing to a warm compress, which can be applied to the limb 2-3 times a day for 10-15 minutes if swelling is still present. **** The goal of the cold or warm therapy is to help relieve both pain and swelling, however if your pet fights or resists this treatment, do not continue as they will recover regardless of your ability to apply compresses to the limb.

Schedule suture/staple removal or an incision check in 10-14 days.

- () Contact us with additional questions about physical therapy.
- () Other: Laser therapy can be initiated as soon as following surgery. Laser therapy can be used 2-3 times a week in the initial few weeks following surgery to help with healing if desired

Nausea is common following General Anesthesia, in case of nausea:

- FOOD AND WATER: Large intakes of food and water following a hospital visit are common due to the excitement of returning home. This type of vomiting can often be eliminated by not allowing access to food or water for 2 hours after returning home.
 - o A bland/special diet may recommended, the length of time will depend on the type of surgery that has been performed. For orthopedic or neurologic surgery the bland diet may only be needed for a few days, following intestinal surgery, the special diet may be needed for up to a couple of weeks.
 - o Following any nausea or intestinal surgery, food and water is recommended in small amounts every 4-6 hours for a few days, then the volume can be increased and the frequency of meal feedings can be decreased to what is more normal.

A bland diet such as Eukanuba Low Residue, Hill's I/D, or Royal Canine Intestinal diets can be purchase or a home-made diet can be made with a 50:50 mixture of a cooked protein source such as hamburger, turkey, chicken, or cottage cheese (all fat removed) combined with a carbohydrate source such as rice, pasta, or mashed potato. We recommend gradually mixing the regular diet into this bland diet during the first week home.

PLEASE RETURN your pet for () An incision check (suture removal) is recommended in 10-14 days
() A re-examination is recommended in 4-6 weeks