



SMALL ANIMAL ORTHOPAEDICS

Discharge Instructions Following Implant Removal

With orthopaedic procedures, implants such as pins, wires, bone plates and screws may be used to help in repairing fractures or stabilising other underlying issues such as cruciate injuries.

The implants often serve as an internal brace, supporting the bone being repaired. Once that bone has healed, the implants are usually no longer needed in maintaining that repair. The intention is for the implants to stay in the patient for the remainder of their life. We do not routinely remove implants because of the unwarranted soft tissue trauma entailed in retrieving them.

Unfortunately there are rare occasions when implant removal may be indicated. The most common reasons are: infection, instability, implant failure or they are an ongoing source of irritation. After all, they are metal foreign material.

To retrieve the implants, a skin incision is commonly made over the original surgery scar, the implants are dissected out and removed. Some screws and soft tissue in the vicinity may be sent off to an external lab for bacterial culture and sensitivity. This is to confirm what type of bacteria is present if infection is a concern. C&S results may dictate if any changes are needed in your pet's antibiotic course. The site is then thoroughly flushed out with saline to improve cleanliness and closed.

An Elizabethan collar may be required should there be any signs of attempting to lick at the bandaging or wound, and each patient will be different. Please request a collar from the clinic staff if you think your pet will be interested in chewing on the bandage. Your pet accessing their wound is a very easy way to introduce infection and should be avoided.

Re-examination

A few routine examinations are advised in the early post-operative period to monitor for any signs of infection or complication.

Week 1: wound examination

Week 2: wound examination and assessment.

Medication

A course of antibiotics and anti-inflammatory medication may be dispensed. Please follow the label instructions carefully and contact your veterinarian should you have any queries. Should there be any gastrointestinal signs (vomiting, diarrhoea) please stop the medication and contact

your veterinarian for further advice. The antibiotics may be readjusted by your vet once C&S if dictated by the C&S results.

Rehabilitation

As our patients are often impulse driven and not understanding of rest and controlled rehabilitation, it is essential that you take the reins for this process. Our patients often want to do more than they are capable of, putting their recently repaired bones and soft tissue at risk. Please find some general expectations and basic rehab guidelines below. Keep in mind that every patient has different recovery needs and this may need some tweaking to match your pet's requirements.

- Strict rest and confinement for 7-10 days.
- Lead walks only for 5-10 minutes, 2-3 times a day for the next 3-4 weeks pending comfort level.
- If doing well at 4 weeks postop, can return to normal activity.

LONG-TERM

Most patients have a great prognosis and return to normal activity. No further action is usually required once the bone and soft tissue have recovered.

Should need any further advice on longer term management or assistance, please do not hesitate to contact your regular veterinarian.