

TPLO DISCHARGE INSTRUCTIONS

Your pet had a complex surgical procedure that needs your help in healing successfully. Failure to follow these instructions closely could lead to severe complications that will cost your pet a long term recovery as well as financially. Therefore, it is very important to follow these instructions closely to insure success. Any questions please do not hesitate to call at any times.

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS:

- Absolutely no running or jumping or off leash activity is allowed for the next 8 weeks.
- Monitor the incision daily for excessive heat, swelling, redness or discharge.
- If your pet begins to lick or chew at the incision we will need to get a protective head restraint collar to prevent infection or self trauma.
- Administer the medications as prescribed.
 - Carprofen (anti inflammatory)
 - If possible give this with food at breakfast times.
 - Gabapentin (pain medication)
 - If possible give the Gabapentin, food not necessary, at lunch and bedtimes
 - This allows for more even control of post operative pain throughout the day when times alternated with the Carprofen.
 - Cefpodoxime (antibiotic)
 - Give at breakfast & dinner times.
 - If your pet refuses to eat, appears lethargic, vomits or has diarrhea please do not hesitate to call.
- Short leash walks to the bathroom as needed throughout the day. Be sure you walk slowly and your pet places weight on the surgery leg with every step.
- If overweight*** Feed your pet his/ her normal diet; however, reduce the amount you feed your pet by 25% to help lose weight.
- A glucosamine supplement and an Omega 3 fatty acid supplement will be dispensed to support the joint and articular cartilage against inflammation during the healing process.

PHYSICAL THERAPY:

Twice daily: perform 5 minutes of muscle massage followed by 20 full range of motion exercises (gently flex, extend and flex the knee like your pet were riding a bike to keep the joint loose) and finish with an ice pack for 10 minutes (the ice helps reduce inflammation and local control pain)

Important, most moms and dads have a hard time with range of motion exercises, meaning they are afraid they will break their child. You will not! Extension is very important so be sure to push your pets limits and work a full range of motion especially in extension.

- if your pet tolerates the ice you can apply ice to the knee as often as your time allows).
- You may walk your pet as many times throughout the day as needed to do his business.
- It is very important to walk slowly on your walks so that your dog places the leg with every step. This is very important in the early rehab period. If you allow your dog to hop or skip off the leg this will slow your pets recovery.
- Week one
 - In addition to bathroom breaks, two to three 7 to 10 minute leash walks.
 - The goal is to place the surgical foot with every step. Go slowly.
- Week two
 - Prior to the walks, apply a heat pack or towel to the knee for 10 to fifteen minutes. While the tissues are heating up you can work on massaging the hamstrings, quadriceps and calf muscles. This helps relax your dog and get the blood flowing. Following the massage and 10 minutes of heat begin to work the range of motion exercises, flex extend and flex. Go slowly and push full flexion and full extension of the knee. Extension is the most important! If we lose even 10 to 20 degrees of extension you will appreciate a noticeable lameness. Once we regain full extension the lameness will disappear.
 - Increase the length of walks to 12 to 15 minutes.
 - Sit and stand exercises are also good throughout the walk to help push off on the foot as your pet stands which builds muscle. Important- be sure your dog sits squarely on his/ her back end- if needed help position your pet to a square sit and then rise slowly and controlled. Some dogs may need to sit on a curb or towel because they are not ready to fully get into a sitting position.
 - After the exercises and walks apply an ice pack for 10 to 15 minutes if tolerated to help reduce inflammation caused by our rehab activities.
- Week 3 & 4

Suture removal at day 14ish post operative and assessment of function and the next step with rehab. If available, underwater treadmill therapy can begin at this time.

- Gradually increase the time of the walks by 25% every few days.
- Begin to add hill and or stairs into your walks. This shifts weight to the back legs as you go up. Go slowly and be sure again your pet is placing weight on the surgery leg.
- Continue occasional sit and stands while walking.
- Also begin walking randomly in figure eights. This works on placing and knowing where the foot is as well as building/ working different muscle groups

- Begin walking on different surfaces- concrete, grass, tall weeds or ground cover, rocks or sand- this works different muscles and balance.
- Begin speed work

Begin slowly and then gradually begin to walk a little faster, hold this pace for 30 seconds and then slow down, now repeat slow- medium to fast ultimately. This allows your pet to begin to accommodate to faster paces without picking up or skipping on the foot. Be sure as you increase your speed your dog is putting weight on the leg and not skipping off of it. Most dogs at the end of week four are walking 20 plus minutes each time.

The key at this stage- make the exercise fun! Don't do the same routine every day, for example, one trip may be more hills and the next trip may be more sit to stands with figure eights and speed work. When you walk out of the house turn left this time and next time turn right. Make it varied and fun. If needed get in the car and go to the park, Home Depot, etc. This makes it fun. A different environment takes your dogs attention to looking around, etc and not on the fact that you are still working/ rehabbing the leg. As you progress, begin to add speed work to your hills.

- Week 5-6, consistently weight bearing at all speeds is expected. At this stage we are working on building muscle, so more speed and lots of hills.
- Week 7-8, we are almost there, light jogging on a leash is permitted.
- At the end of week 8 we need to recheck radiographs to assess bony healing and to see if we are ready to be set free.

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to call.

If you notice your dogs wants to go further than those guidelines outlined above that is okay, as long as you don't over do it. Plus, the period of time after the exercise or the next morning we do not see a dramatic decline or stiffness. If we overdo simply cut back the next exercise period.

If you have any questions throughout the rehab period please call. We would rather get lots of 'unnecessary' calls than for you to feel like you are 'bothering' us and something little that blows up big occurs. Again, this is all new to you. No question or worry is a dumb question. We do these cases everyday so please call so we can put your mind at ease. You've got enough to worry about. Worse case scenario is if you call too much we'll ask you to bake some brownies and bring them in :)

If you have ever been through rehab you know we will make your pet stiff and sore. This is where ice helps us as it is a great anti inflammatory and 'pain medication'. But, if needed we will prescribe an anti inflammatory and/ or pain mediation as needed.

Again, make it fun (this will help your state of mind as well), vary the routine, and watch your pet excel and get back to pain free function asap.