



# Houston Mobile Veterinary Surgery

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## **Extracapsular CCL stabilization (LFS) Discharge Instructions**

### **DIAGNOSIS:**

Complete cranial cruciate ligament tear

### **PROCEDURES:**

Extracapsular stabilization (lateral fabellar suture or LFS)

### **PROGNOSIS:**

Good with surgical repair. The lateral fabellar suture (LFS) has been successful at restoring a comfortable hind limb function after an appropriate healing period. Complications that may arise include: incisional infection, dehiscence (opening of the incision site), seroma (sterile accumulation of fluid under the skin), and implant failure (premature breakage of the suture). Dogs will have progression of osteoarthritis even after surgery.

The meniscus is a cartilage within the knee that acts like a cushion in between the femur and tibia. Dogs with meniscal tears will have a faster progression of osteoarthritis compared to dogs with a normal meniscus at the time of surgery. Dogs with cruciate tears can develop meniscal tears even after an extracapsular stabilization. Some dogs will develop meniscal tears months or years after surgery.

40-60% of patients with a cruciate will tear the cruciate ligament in their other leg.

In most cases the implants remain in place for the remainder of the pet's life. In a small percentage of cases implant removal is needed if the plate is causing complications.

If the implants fail (screw loosening, plate fracture, or screw breakage) additional surgery may be required.

Please follow the instructions below to decrease the incidence of potential complications.

### **INCISION CARE:**

- Please monitor the incision for dehiscence (opening) or for any signs of infection including redness, swelling, heat and discharge. If you see any of these signs, please contact your primary care veterinarian.
- Do not allow your pet to bother (lick, scratch or rub) the incision site. Your pet should wear an Elizabethan-collar at all times when not directly supervised until the incision is healed and sutures or staples are removed. Failure to follow this recommendation could lead to complications at your pet's incision site.
  - E-collars can be purchased from your regular vet, most pet stores or amazon.com
- Do not allow the incision to get wet (no baths or swimming) until the incision is healed.
- Skin sutures or staples, if present, will need to be removed in 10-14 days. Please make an appointment with your primary care veterinarian for this.
- You may continue to cold pack your pet's incision site 3 to 4 times daily for 10-15 minutes each time for the next 3 days to decrease postoperative pain and inflammation. Always place a protective layer, such as a thin towel, between the ice pack and your pet's skin.
- After the 3 days, you may switch to a warm compress 3 to 4 times daily for 3 to 5 more days if the surgical site appears bruised, painful or swollen. Always test the warm pack to make sure it is not too hot and place a protective layer, such as a thin towel, between the warm pack and your pet's skin.

**ALLOWING YOUR PET TO LICK THE INCISION, EVEN FOR SHORT PERIODS, SIGNIFICANTLY INCREASES THE RISKS OF INCISIONAL COMPLICATIONS AND INFECTION.**

### **EXERCISE RESTRICTION:**

**WEEKS 1-2**

## Extracapsular CCL repair Discharge instructions

- Your pet should be confined to a kennel or small room when not directly supervised until the surgical site is healed and you have been instructed to increase their activity.
- No running, jumping, playing with other pets, or uncontrolled off leash activities are allowed.
- Your pet should be allowed to go out only for urination and defecation 3 to 4 times daily and should always be on a leash.
- During the first two weeks your pet can be taken on a short leash walk. This should be limited to 5-10 minutes. Walk them slow enough that they use the operated leg with each step.

### **WEEKS 2-6**

- If the incision is healed you can increase the length of the leash walks to 20-30 minutes 2-3 times daily.
- Still no uncontrolled activity. No running, jumping, playing with other pets.
- Confinement to a kennel or small room is still recommended.
- All outside activity should still be on a leash.

### **WEEKS 6-12**

- If the knee is stable and your pet is doing well at the 6 week recheck you can increase the activity level over 3-4 weeks until your pet is back to normal activity.
- Keeping them in a kennel is no longer needed
- They can SLOWLY have more time to run, jump, or play. Start with a few minutes of unrestricted activity and add a few minutes each day until they are unrestricted.
- Leash walks can be continued and there is no limit to the duration of the walks.

### **INADEQUATE RESTRICTION OF ACTIVITY IS A COMMON CAUSE OF POSTOPERATIVE COMPLICATIONS AND INCREASED VETERINARY COSTS.**

#### **REHABILITATION:**

Rehabilitation sessions for post-operative orthopedic patients are very important. Passive range of motion can help retain a good range of motion in their joints. Lay your pet down with the operated leg up. Gently and slowly flex the toes until there is minimal resistance. At this point hold the toes in flexion for 1-2 seconds, then extend their toes until there is minimal resistance and hold them there for 1-2 seconds. Repeat these procedures 10-15 times and then move up to their ankle, knee, and hip and repeat the flexion and extension in a similar manner for 10-15 repetitions. You can also move their leg in a bicycle motion forwards and backwards for 1 minute. Afterwards take them on a very slow leash walk for 5-10 minutes. After these exercises your pet may be a little sore. You can ice pack the limb by applying a bag of ice or frozen vegetables to their stifle. It should stay on for 5-10 minutes, and a protective layer should always be placed between the skin and the ice.

Some dogs may require more intensive physical therapy.

Please contact the clinic below and schedule an evaluation if you would like to pursue rehabilitation:

Dr. Rick Wall, DVM, CCRP, DAAPM

281- 298-5509

[www.animalclinicofthewoodlands.com](http://www.animalclinicofthewoodlands.com)

**DIET:** Your pet can resume their normal diet. If they are not interested in their regular diet you can try plain white rice, chicken breast (unseasoned), and/ or cottage cheese.

#### **MONITORING:**

- Your pet should gradually increase the amount of weight that they put on their operated leg.
- They should be using their leg consistently within the first 5-7 days.
- If they are not using his leg consistently within this time period please call us so that we can re-evaluate them.
- Your pet may have a decreased appetite following anesthesia and surgery. This is not unusual and is often due to the pain medications and stress of hospitalization. Please monitor your pet's appetite and call us if they are not eating in the next few days.
- Anesthesia and pain medications can cause constipation. It is not unusual for pets to go several days without a bowel movement.

**You may notice swelling in the area of the ankle 2-3 days after surgery. This is normal because the swelling that is at the surgery site post operatively will move down the leg due to gravity.**

#### **MEDICATIONS:**

**The most common medications used after surgery are pain medications and anti-inflammatories. Please**

**follow the directions provided by your veterinarian.**

Non steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDS) are used to treat post operative pain and inflammation. They are typically given for 10-14 days following surgery. Side effects include vomiting, diarrhea, and decreased appetite. If you notice any of these signs or dark tarry stools please discontinue this medication and call your regular veterinarian. If you pet has been on any NSAID or steroid (prednisone) make sure to tell your veterinarian. **Giving more than one type of NSAID, suddenly switching from one NSAID to another, or giving NSAIDS and steroids at the same time can significantly increase the risk of side effects.**

Antibiotics can help decrease the risk of infection but will not replace proper incision care. Most antibiotics are given for 7-10 days following surgery. Just like their use in people not giving the correct dose or not finishing the antibiotic may lead to antibiotic resistance.

**RECHECKS:**

- Your pet needs to have their incision checked in 10-14 days. Sutures or staples, if present, will be removed at that time and we will evaluate your pet's progress. Please call us or your primary veterinarian to make an appointment for this.
- Re-evaluation is required 6 weeks after surgery. Please call for an appointment. Radiographs requiring sedation **may** be taken to assess healing. If healing progresses as expected exercise restrictions will be loosened and rehabilitation instructions will be provided. Do not feed your pet the morning of the appointment.

**Thank you for trusting us with your pet's care. They have been a great patient.**

**NOTE: Additional charges may be incurred for any future office visits, radiographs, anesthesia, or procedures.**