



“Home-care instructions after Cruciate/Knee Surgery”

Going Home:

Every dog is different and thus will vary in what medications they need. As a general rule, we place dogs on:

- An anti-inflammatory drug, such as “rimadyl” or “meloxicam” for at least 7 days to help alleviate pain and swelling
- “Zydax”, which is an anti-arthritis drug. The first Injection is given 5 days after surgery and subsequent injections are given weekly for a total of 4 injections
- A pain control “Fentanyl” patch placed on the back leg and to be removed after 5 days

Up to 5 days post-surgery:

AT HOME:

- Strict confinement. *This means no free walking apart from quietly inside the house, basically sitting down doing nothing. Outside to toilet on lead*
- Massage around thighs and hips for 5 minutes, twice daily. Start by gently stroking in downward motions and then change to gently kneading up the leg and hip.
- Gentle Flexion/extension exercises 5-10 minutes twice daily. *Just flex and extend individual joints, hock, hip and stifle if dog allows. As far as dog is comfortable.*
- Place Cold pack (frozen peas are best as they will mold well) on the knee for 15 minutes twice daily. Place icepack on the outside of the leg, making sure it is not directly on the skin, wrapping in a towel is best to prevent ice burn.
- It is also good during this recovery to gently massage the other three legs and hips as they will be carrying extra weight and working more during this recovery process.

AT VET:

- Zydax weekly injections start in week 1. The first injection is given at day 3-6, ideally five days following surgery. This will continue weekly for four weeks. At this visit, the vet will check the surgical wound and remove the fentanyl patch.
- We expect most dogs to not bear weight on the leg for this first week.

WEEK 2-3

AT HOME:

- We stop using cold packs at this point and start using heat packs on the surgery knee. This is best done for 15-20 minutes prior to massaging around the thigh and hip. We continue to massage (as explained above) around the thigh and hip for 5 minutes, twice daily.
 - Please note, heat pack should be less than 75 degrees and should be wrapped in a towel to prevent direct contact with skin. To judge if heat pack is too hot, place in inner side of own arm and if tolerated, should be fine.
- Gentle Flexion (bend)/extension exercises 5-10 minutes twice daily, moving to gentle bicycling 5-10 times twice daily, if tolerated.

- When the vet says your pet is ready, start slow walks on a flat, non-slippery surface, on leash, no pulling for 5 minutes, two to three times a day
- Again it is important to continue to gently massage the other three legs and hips as they will be carrying extra weight and working more during this recovery process.

AT VET:

- Week 2: The second Zydax injection will be given. The vet will also check the surgical wound and remove the stitches.
- Week 3: The third Zydax injection will be given.
- Two to three weeks after the surgery, we expect the foot to be touching the ground and the see some weight bearing on the leg.

WEEK 4-5

AT HOME:

- Massage around thigh and hip for 5 minutes twice daily, using both stroking and kneading techniques discussed earlier. Prior to massaging, apply heat using a heat pack at less than 75 degrees for 15-20 minutes.
- Gentle flexion (bend)/extension exercises 15 minutes twice daily. Alternatively, gentle bicycling 15 minutes twice daily is better, if tolerate d.
- Walk on flat, non-slippery surface on leash, no pulling. Do this for 15-20 minutes each day.
- Start walking in deep water (*this means water half way up dogs chest so that it is supporting some weight*) 5-10 minutes daily when possible.
- Continue to gently massage the other three legs and hips as they will be carrying extra weight and working more during this recovery process.

AT VET:

- Week 4: The fourth and final Zydax injection is given. At this visit, the vet will also check progress.
- At this stage, we would expect the dog to be using the leg

WEEK 6-12

AT HOME:

- Massage thigh and hip 5 minutes twice daily using both stroking and kneading techniques, again heating with heat pack as done in previous weeks.
- Gentle flexion/extension exercises 15-20 minutes twice daily.
- Gentle bicycling 15 minutes twice daily is better if dog will tolerate it
- Swimming 15-20 minutes daily or when possible.
- Walk on uneven surfaces, adding stairs, hills and circling. 20-30 minutes, 2-3 times daily.

AT VET:

- Week 6-8: revisit with vet for a post-surgery visit. Depending on the procedure that was performed, x-rays may be required at this time.
- Week 10-12: revisit with vet to check progress.