

TPLO Surgery Home Care Instructions

Your dog has gone through Tibial Plateau Leveling Osteomy (TPLO) surgery. This procedure, developed over the last 20 years by Dr. Barclay Slocum, is aimed at changing the biomechanics of the stifle (knee). The normally sloped tibial plateau of the dog is rotated to become flat. This eliminates the tendency for the tibia (shinbone) to thrust forward during weight bearing, which in turn keeps the menisci (cartilages) from being torn and crushed. TPLO surgery has improved success at avoiding long-term development of arthritis and leads to better resumption of normal activities than is typically seen with other surgeries for cranial cruciate ligament rupture.

Your pet has a transdermal Fentanyl patch on the bottom of the “good” (non-surgical) foot. This will provide a timed-release of narcotic pain medication for the three or so days after surgery. You should bring your pet into the hospital for patch-removal three days after surgery. If you choose to do this at home, remove the colored elastic wrap, remove the clear plastic patch, fold the patch upon itself (sticky side to sticky side) and flush it down the drain. If you contact the drug-containing surface with your hands, simply wash your hands. Fentanyl, which is extensively used in human medicine, is a narcotic pain medication and, as such, may produce sedation, lethargy, loss of appetite and constipation in patients after surgery. If you have concerns about these symptoms in your pet, please call the hospital.

When we treat patients having CCL rupture, we enter the stifle (knee) joint. We prepare every patient with complete aseptic surgical technique to prevent infection of the joint. Unfortunately, joint fluid makes a wonderful breeding ground for bacteria. For this reason, your pet has been placed on a very broad spectrum of antibiotics. Please give both the antibiotics according to the prescribed twice-daily schedule until the pills are gone.

Your veterinary surgeon has prescribed one of several NSAIDs (non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs) for use in the post-operative period. These drugs are very strong and are very safe, providing that we monitor your pet’s situation. NSAIDs (which include aspirin, Advil and many others) are aimed at inhibiting the COX 2 enzyme that causes pain and inflammation. It is likely that your pet has already been taking an NSAID (such as Rimadyl, Deramaxx or Metacam) for a period of time before surgery. You know that you need to continue to monitor for loss of appetite, vomiting and diarrhea as your pet continues NSAID therapy after surgery. Please call the hospital if you have concerns about any of these symptoms.

Please bring your pet back in 10 to 14 days to remove staples. You can drop in any time for the above procedures.

Make an appointment for three weeks following the surgery to have your veterinarian re-check the leg.

For eight to 12 weeks following surgery, a strict confinement is required:

1. Your pet can be inside, on carpeted surfaces, under your direct supervision.
2. They must be on a leash at all times when outside for airing and going to the bathroom.

3. When not under your direct supervision, they are to be confined in an airline kennel or equivalent space.

Other important directions regarding after-care:

Playing with other animals is not allowed during confinement. If there are other pets in your household, you will need to keep them separated.

During confinement, your pet's food intake needs to be reduced to prevent weight gain. Most dogs will maintain their current weight if their food intake is cut in half. Their water intake should remain normal.

If at any time during your pet's recovery and healing they have a setback or a decrease in function, we need to be contacted to make sure they have not injured themselves.

Some swelling and bruising is normal following surgery. If you are concerned at any point about your pet's progress or recovery, please contact us.

You will need to monitor your pet's incision during the first two weeks following surgery, to ensure they are not licking or chewing the area. If you notice your pet has started licking the area, you will need to take steps to discourage them from doing so.

If you have any questions, please call us at 415-921-0410.