

## ***Post-operative Discharge Instructions following Elbow Arthroscopy for Management of Fragmented Medial Coronoid Process***

Surgery today involved elbow arthroscopy using a 2.3mm scope and camera for the assessment of the intra-articular cartilage, examination of secondary joint and inflammatory changes and excision of the medial coronoid process.

Recovery and rehabilitation should be straight forward with monitoring of the wound for infection and rest to allow the joint to heal and recover with minimal inflammation. Skin stitches have been placed in the incisions on the inside of the elbow and will require removal in 10-14 days time.

There will be swelling of the soft tissues around the elbow for 2-5 day following the arthroscopy and the wounds may discharge slightly for 24-48 hours following the procedure, but this should resolve without intervention. Swelling of the elbow and lower part of the leg should resolve in the next 1-2 weeks. Please monitor the wounds daily for redness, increased swelling, or increased discharge and contact your regular veterinarian for advice and an examination, as it is important to identify any problems early. An increase in the level of limping will be noted initially but this should improve gradually in the coming weeks.

The long-term prognosis will be good to excellent for 85% of patients, despite the progression of osteoarthritis down the track. There may be a persistent limp evident for some patients. Long-term management is focused on weight control (ideal body condition), joint supplementation (fish oils, glucosamine/chondroitin, pentosanpolysulfate injections), and anti-inflammatories as required.

### **Re-examination**

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

*DAY 5-7:* Routine wound examination.

*DAY 10-14:* Wound examination, and suture removal

*WEEK 6:* Routine examination and progress assessment as required.

*Please fast your pet prior to these appointments in case sedation is required.*

### **Medication**

A course of anti-inflammatory medication will 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.

### **Rehabilitation**

#### ***WEEK 1-2***

*Should be walking well and improving, gradually, weekly.*

*There may be a worsening of the limp in the early post-surgery period.*

Strict Rest and Confinement or Strict Supervision for 1-2 weeks

Short walks on a lead out to the backyard for toileting purposes only 2-6 times daily.

On-lead at all times / No Stairs No jumping No swimming No baths

Ice Packs (24-48 hours) may be applied to the elbow, 2-4 times daily for 20 minutes to minimise early post-operative swelling and help with pain relief. Do not apply the ice directly to the skin but use a cloth between.

Heat packs (after 48 hours) may be applied to the elbow 2-4 times daily for 20 minutes to aid resolution of the swelling and promote circulation and healing. Ensure the heat pack is not too hot as to burn the skin but should be comfortably warm.

**WEEK 3-6**

*Improving weight bearing on the leg, with a possible mild to moderate limp.*

Strict Rest or Strict Supervision.

Gradually increase the length of lead controlled walks by 5minute increments, starting at 5 minutes, up to 2-6 times daily.

If your pet limps more towards the end of the walk reduce the length of walk to a point which is well tolerated.

Use anti-inflammatories as required if limping.

On-lead at all times / No Stairs No jumping.

May commence swimming and have baths after suture removal / Hydrotherapy may commence.

Heat packs continued and applied to the elbow 2-4 times daily for 20 minutes to aid resolution of the swelling and promote circulation and healing. Ensure the heat pack is not too hot as to burn the skin but should be comfortably warm.

**WEEK 6**

Gradual return to more normal levels of activity.