

Post Operative Instructions

Bandage/Cast Care

Bandages need to be looked after to ensure that healing occurs. Neglected bandages can cause considerable damage such as pressure sores, ulcerated and infected skin and make the original injury or wound much worse. It is therefore very important to follow ALL instructions carefully, bandages checked daily and if there are ever any concerns that you contact us or re visit as soon as possible.

Why bandage?

- Protect a wound from the environment and reduce contamination or infection of a wound
- Stop self-trauma of a wound or area whilst healing, contrary to popular belief it is not good for an animal to be licking or constantly cleaning a wound or sore.
- Give support, comfort and pain relief to a tendon, ligament or bone injury whilst healing or after surgery
- To reduce movement of a joint or reduce the use of a limb whilst healing is taking place

Bandages need to be applied properly with the right material, be secure, firm, comfortable and remain in place without movement after being applied. It is vitally important that they remain dry.

Problems and daily checks

Movement/Slipping

If a bandage slips down the limb it will no longer be doing the job it is supposed to and no longer giving the correct support. Usually due to too much activity, the animal has chewed it or it is left on too long, over the time recommended by the vet. This can also be due to the fact that swelling has reduced and the bandage is now loose, again another reason for it to be changed at the correct time.

Bandage becomes too tight

This can happen because the limb has become swollen underneath due to the actual injury or wound. The main cause is too much activity, not enough rest or the material underneath the outer layer has become wet and expanded. If too tight, circulation problems can arise and injuries/wounds can become much worse underneath. Check the top of the bandage that it does not appear too tight.

Bandage becomes wet or soiled

Mostly this is because the animal is walked without a cover through puddles/wet surfaces or the bandage becomes soaked in urine. This can have serious implications. The outer layer may dry or soon appear dry but the softer bandage material underneath will be soaked and will never dry. This wet or urine soaked bandage covering the skin or a wound will start to infect the skin and can turn into a major problem. It can also get wet if there is a lot of discharge from a wound, therefore, look out for patches appearing from within.

ALWAYS cover the bandage when going out for toileting or outdoors on ANY wet ground. A plastic bag tied around the top of the bandage or using a very loose elastic band will usually be enough. However, there are numerous protective covers available to buy which are completely waterproof which can be a good investment if your pet is going to have a bandage for some time. Whatever you use needs to be completely waterproof to avoid these issues.

Out of hours contact – Vets Now Emergency Service - 028 90651729

Take the cover off once back indoors to allow the bandage to breathe and avoid getting wet from condensation. These covers are only to be used at risk times NOT all the time.

Tearing/damage to bandage

Most often this is because it has been chewed, so this must be avoided. Your pet may need to wear a buster collar and please ask for one and use one if you think it is possible your pet may try and remove the bandage. This is quite often a problem at night or when the animal is left alone. Please err on the side of caution. Another reason is too much activity and the bandage wears down or tears around the foot. If you see the toes starting to come through a bandage it needs replaced ASAP.

Complications with the original injury

Although many bandages/casts/splints are used to help stabilise injuries and support a joint or bone after surgery, things can change and go wrong. Your pet will limp with the fact that there is a bandage in place as it hinders their movement. However, if they start to limp more or not use the leg at all, it may be a sign that things have changed and therefore need to be examined sooner.

Please read the following carefully

- Keep the bandage dry and covered outdoors at ALL times, if it gets wet get it changed even if the top layer appears dry. If it becomes soaked in urine, it MUST be changed
- STRICTLY REST your animal, NEVER off the lead and only outdoors to toilet, follow the instructions in terms of what your pet it allowed to do. No excessive activity of any kind
- AVOID CHEWING – use buster collars if necessary, if it gets chewed get it changed sooner than planned
- CHECK daily that it is not too loose or too tight – change if so
- If the animal removes the bandage, re visit immediately to have another replaced, do NOT be tempted to use home materials to replace it yourself
- Please re visit at the advised time period. If left on too long things can become a lot worse, with major setbacks which will mean to longer recovery time in the end. Even 1-2 days can make a vast difference
- If your pet starts to limp more than previously or become non weight bearing, re visit sooner

If there are any queries please call us, we would much rather change a bandage too soon than too late where we find things underneath the bandage have become worse instead of better.

Your next appointment should be made indays, please see reception.