



VETERINARY SURGERY

Harper Lane
Yeadon
Leeds
LS19 7RP
Tel: 0113 2505522

Andrew Price BVMS MRCVS Katie Price BSc(Hons) BVMS MRCVS
24 Hours Emergency Service Tel: 0113 2505522
Email: tweedhouse_vets@hotmail.com www.tweedhousevets.co.uk

Tweed House Ltd. Registered Office: 24/25 Harper Terrace, Yeadon, Leeds LS19 7RP
Registered No. 4588 364 • Directors: A. Price & K. Price

78 Lowtown
Pudsey
Leeds
LS28 7AA
Tel: 0113 2573744

Dogs may take up to 4 months to fully recover from cruciate surgery. The first 6 post operative weeks require the greatest degree of restriction in the dogs' activity levels. Animals should be confined to one level of the house, taken outside on a lead for toilet purposes and short walks and be restricted from activities likely to overload the repair. This would include free running, jumping up, climbing stairs and running on slippery surfaces. Some people with laminate floors have temporarily carpeted this for the post operative period and I've known some owners to sleep downstairs during the recovery phase so their dog can avoid the stairs!

Clinical and possibly radiographic examination of your dog is usually required 6 weeks post operatively. This will allow clinical assessment by your vet and discussion of your dog's progress and future plans. In the vast majority of cases animals can usually start to increase their activity levels following this visit and also may benefit from hydrotherapy at this stage. The aim is for a full return to exercise 3 to 4 months following surgery.

The post-operative program is given below:

- **Week1-** Strict rest. Use ice pack therapy (e.g. bag of frozen peas wrapped in a towel applied to surgical site). Allow short, controlled, lead walks on level surface only to allow for toileting.
- **Week 2-** Start slow lead walks up to 10 minutes per day. Perform 30 repetitions of passive range of motion (PROM) three times daily. This is bending and extending the knee carefully and slowly 30 times. Continue ice pack therapy after exercise.
- **Week 3-** Start increasing lead walks to up to 20 minutes per day, including uneven surfaces. Continue with ice pack therapy after exercise. Continue PROM exercises.
- **Weeks 4 and 5-** Increase lead walks to up to 30 minutes a day and include gradual inclines and declines. Continue ice therapy if swelling is observed. Continue PROM exercises.
- **Week 6-** Continue PROM and lead walks. Initiate stair climbing and possibly swimming (hydrotherapy).
- **Weeks 7 to 12-** Progress by increasing length of time for walking, swimming and stair climbing. By week 12 normal exercise. At all times during a physical therapy program, improvement should be made. If your pet becomes more painful or lame during the program, back up to easier exercises and seek advice from your vet.

Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) will be used alongside this physical therapy program. NSAIDs are excellent pain relievers. The dose of NSAID that your pet receives may be altered during the program, but your vet will advise you on this.

What level of function can I expect?

Although dogs will inevitably develop osteoarthritis following cruciate ligament failure, most dogs return to excellent function following surgery. We have operated on a number of working dogs that have had bilateral cruciate surgery (both hindlimbs affected) and have gone back to full work. Maintaining a light body weight and active lifestyle are important parts of the post operative management.

What about food supplements?

The most important aspect in managing these dogs post operatively is to prevent the dog from becoming overweight and to adopt an active lifestyle. Regular, frequent but not excessive exercise is usually best. Food supplements including glucosamine and fish oils may provide some benefits. Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs are the mainstay of post-operative treatment. Some dogs require these longer term or later in life if osteoarthritis becomes severe.