Total Hip Replacement Postoperative Care Instructions

After your pet undergoes a total hip replacement surgery (THR), their post-operative care is critical in terms of comfort, safety and recuperation. By carefully following the instruction listed below, you can aid healing, minimize the risk of complications or requiring additional surgery and speed recovery. These instructions are vital to ensuring your pet’s comfort! Here is what you can expect:

Incisional Discharge

Any drainage or discharge from the incisions is not normal! If any presents itself, please contact your veterinarian or GVS. Also contact us if the incision has an unpleasant, as this could be a sign of infection.

Medications

It is imperative for your pet’s health that you follow the medication schedule exactly and give prescribed medications for the length of time indicated. We cannot stress this enough! A plastic pill box can help you in remembering to give your pet their medications. Most medications are given to your pet the morning on their release.

A pain patch is applied to your pet’s skin for pain relief which may still be present during their release. If this applies to you, please do not allow the patch to become loose, or come in contact with a child. You may remove the pain patch after the first 48 hours of release.

Incisions

Surgical incisions need to remain dry to prevent infection from occurring. Keep checking the incision frequently for discharge or odors until it is completely healed. Otherwise, leave it alone. Do not let your pet lick their incision, as it may irritate the incision, and cause infection. Licking may also cause the stitches to be pulled out. The same holds true for biting. In case of excessive licking or biting an E-Collar may be recommended.

Activity Restrictions

Activity must be restricted for the first six weeks following surgery. This may be a difficult reality to live with, but it’s an important one! It is particularly important to restrict your pet from running, jumping, playing, stair running, jumping up and down off furniture and walks in the neighborhood.
INADEQUATE RESTRICTION OF ACTIVITY IS A COMMON CAUSE OF POST-OPERATIVE COMPLICATIONS AND INCREASED VETERINARY COSTS.

Crating your pet, or keeping them in a small room, during this period may be beneficial to you. In addition, it is important for your pet to avoid slick surfaces, ensuring they don't slip. Some people find it helpful to place temporary runners in high traffic areas where tile or hardwood flooring is present.

Many pets prefer to be with their people when they aren't feeling well. Some will try to follow you around the house, up and down stairs, and so on. If you use a crate to restrict activity, move the crate to the room you're going to be in so your pet doesn't feel the need to follow you around. The more normal his routine is, the happier he will be.

After the first six weeks you will be asked to begin limited exercise, twice a day, beginning with short regular walks which will be determined at your pet's six week check-up. You may progressively increase the distance of your walks. These walks should last for a full-month. After this time your pet may resume normal activity.

The most difficult part of the healing process is when your pet begins to feel better and wants to be active. Stand firm. It is recommended that you mark your calendar for the six-week target date of when you can lift some of your pet's activity restrictions.

Some strenuous activities should be avoided for life. These include activities where your dog may jump up and land with all their weight being supported by their hind legs, such as in Frisbee. Most endurance activities, including long walks, swimming and running, do not need to be avoided once rehabilitation is complete.

Follow-Up

Checkups are completed at 2 weeks, 6 weeks, and annually thereafter. All sutures are removed at the two week visit. Both the six week and annual checkups will consist of an examination and radiographs. Please note that these checkups may take up to an hour of your time and that your pet may be given a sedative to ensure their comfort is maintained. You have the option of admitting your pet for the day, or making an outpatient appointment, depending on your schedule.

In addition, we closely monitor all total hip replacement recipients for the duration of their life. Therefore, it is recommended that you notify us of any change in your address, and/or or phone number. Periodically, we may send short questioners to you, which ask how your pet is currently doing. We ask that you please help us by filling these out and sending them back to us.

Should your pet ever need antibiotic therapy, or a dental procedure, please feel free to contact us and ask about antibiotic protocols.