



Postoperative Care: Pelvic Osteotomy

Your dog has had a pelvic osteotomy to correct an underlying hip problem. The hip joint is a ball and socket joint. By breaking the pelvis in three places, the socket of the hip has been rotated into position that allows better coverage of the ball and results in a more stable hip joint. The socket is held in this new position using a stainless steel plate and screws. Because the bone has been broken, it will take a minimum of 4 weeks before the bone has healed strongly enough to withstand normal weight-bearing on the operated limb.

Since we cannot put your pet on crutches, and due to their high pain threshold, your pet will tend to use the operated leg too soon, and place excessive strain on the metal implants. Young dogs are especially problematic, as their bones are soft and do not hold the screws very well. Also, they are more difficult to keep quiet. **Thus it is imperative that you keep your pet confined for at least 4 weeks following surgery! They must be kept in a small area indoors, going outside on a leash only to go to the bathroom.** If they are on slick floors or must negotiate stairs, a towel sling placed around their abdomen for support and stability is mandatory. Tranquilizers are helpful to control their activity. Only enough tranquilization to “take the edge off” and make them happy to walk instead of run is necessary. Your pet will rapidly build a tolerance to these drugs which will necessitate higher and higher dosages to obtain the desired level of tranquilization. You will need to slowly increase the dose as needed. These tranquilizers are not addicting, however, overdosing can result in prolonged stupor and loss of appetite. Please consult with our office for dosage adjustments.

The key to success is strict inactivity for 4 weeks. By that time, in most animals, the broken pelvis is healing and we are no longer relying on the metal plate and screws to hold everything together. In general, by eight weeks, the bones have solidly healed and your pet may resume normal activity. At that time, the metal plate and screws are no longer needed, but because it would require another surgery to remove them, they are left in place in the vast majority of pets. The initial 4 weeks are difficult on everyone, but if it results in a happy, healthy, functioning hip joint, then it is well worth it.

Some pets will experience difficulty urinating or having a bowel movement following this surgery. These problems are generally short lived if you catch them early and initiate the appropriate treatment. Metamucil (purchased over the counter at your local pharmacy) will help make the stool soft and easier to pass (mix ¼ teaspoon per 15 pounds of body weight in food). If your pet seems to be having difficulty urinating, or is urinating many times but only a small amount each time, please notify us immediately. There are some oral medications (pills) we can prescribe to help with this problem. Also, you can help your pet empty its bladder. With your pet in a standing position, apply gentle pressure with one hand on either side of the belly (back where the belly meets the hind legs) while they urinate. If your pet is urinating normally it is not necessary to do this

Every dog and each case is a little different. If you have special questions/concerns, please do



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not hesitate to make us aware of them. We are always available to answer your questions during normal business hours as well as on evenings or weekends via our voice mail system. Please leave a message and a member of our staff will return your call as soon as possible.

Thank you for trusting us with the care of your pet.