

Post-Op Care of TTA Rapid or TPLO ACL Repair

Rice Lake Animal Hospital Inc.
110 Kern Ave.
Rice Lake, WI 54868
715-234-4709

AN E-COLLAR (Cone) MAY BE REQUIRED FOR 14 DAYS TO PROTECT THE SKIN INCISION, ABSOLUTELY NO LICKING SHOULD BE ALLOWED. YOUR PET SHOULD BE MAINTAINED ON A LEASH AND/OR CAGE CONFINEMENT FOR A MINIMUM OF 8 WEEKS. PLEASE FOLLOW THE ENTIRE SET OF DISCHARGE INSTRUCTIONS AS CLOSELY AS POSSIBLE.

Home care after any orthopedic surgery is critical to the success of the surgery. Allowing your pet too much activity will alter the anticipated outcome of the surgery. A ruptured ligament is a severe orthopedic injury, and surgery is usually necessary to reduce further arthritis and minimize pain and healing time.

It is very important that your pet not be allowed to run, jump or play until healing of the osteotomy (bone cut) is confirmed by x-rays 10-12 weeks after surgery. Your pet should not be allowed outside except on a leash. Excessive activity can cause pain, and in worst case scenarios, serious complications such as fractures or implant failure, which could lead to the leg being worse than before the surgery.

The main goal the first few days after surgery include the following:

- Swelling and edema control
- Improving range of motion of the affected joint
- Limiting muscle atrophy
- Pain control
- Your dog should begin toe-touching and mild weight bearing 4-7 days after surgery

The following instructions will be your guide to home care.

Week 1:

1. Throughout the entire recovery process please ensure that your pet has stable footing. If you have hardwood, tile, or linoleum floors, please cover them with area rugs, carpet remnants or another non-slip surface.
2. Give all medications as instructed.
3. Apply an ice pack to the knee for 10-15 minutes three or four times a day for the first 48 hours after surgery.
4. After 48 hours, apply a hot-pack to the knee for 10-15 minutes three times a day.
5. Perform passive range of motion exercises (gently flex and extend the knee); 10 slow repetitions three times a day. If your dog is using the leg well these exercises may not be necessary.
6. Precede and follow (before and after) the passive range of motion exercise with massage of the quadriceps muscles (large muscle between the hip and knee).
7. Begin slow leash walks of 5-10 minutes three times a day.

Week 2 & 3:

1. Apply a hot pack to the knee for 10-15 minutes two or three times a day until swelling has resolved.
2. If pain appears to worsen after running out of pain medication, please call and request a refill, as long as it continues to help.
3. You may stop the passive range of motion exercises if your pet is using the leg well.
4. Increase the slow leash walks to 10-20 minutes three times a day.
5. Continue massage and refill the pain meds if lameness increases after discontinuation of pain meds.
6. If applicable, suture removal may be required 12-14 days after surgery. However, in most cases sutures are absorbable and do not need to be removed.
7. Most patients begin to bear some weight by week three, but every pet is different and some may take longer.

Weeks 4 & 5:

1. Increase the slow leash walks to 20-30 minutes three times a day.
2. Have your pet perform 10-15 repetitions of figure-eight walks two or three times a day, circling to both the right and left.
3. Have your pet sit and stand against a wall for 10-15 repetitions three times a day. Keep the affected knee next to the wall so he/she cannot rock their weight off the leg.
4. If available, swimming exercises for five minutes twice a day is helpful.
5. Most pets will be putting weight on the leg at this point in time on a slow walk, but still have a noticeable limp.
6. The important consideration is to have observable improvement every two weeks at this point.
7. Schedule a recheck appointment 4 weeks after surgery to evaluate your pet's progress.

Weeks 6-8:

1. Take your pet on leash walks for 30-40 minutes once a day, slow enough to ensure that your pet is weight bearing on the affected limb.
2. Take your pet on incline walks, hills, or ramps for 5-10 minutes twice a day.
3. Take your pet up a flight of stairs, if available, 5-10 times slowly twice a day.
4. Continue swimming if possible.

Weeks 9-12:

At this point, your pet's healing should be complete and should gradually return to full activity by the end of 12 weeks.

1. Take your pet on faster 30-40 minute walks once or twice a day.
2. Take your pet for a run, straight-line only, no turns, for 10-15 minutes twice a day.
3. Schedule another recheck 10-12 weeks after surgery to evaluate your pet's progress, and to repeat x-rays to evaluate bone healing.

Additional Instructions:

1. Licking at the incision must be discouraged because it will lead to chewing at the sutures or staples causing a wound infection. It may be necessary to use an E-Collar (cone) to prevent licking.
2. Any unusual odors, drainage or persistent licking are indicators that there may be a potential problem and should be checked by us immediately.
3. Feed your pet its regular diet, but reduce it by 10% to allow for reduced activity.

4. Mild swelling may occur near the incision or low on the limb. Moderate or severe swelling should be checked immediately.
5. Use of a protective joint supplement with glucosamine and chondroitin is highly recommended for the life of your pet.

Complications:

As with any surgical procedure, complications may occur. Unlike human patients who can use a sling or crutches, our patients will not stay off a healing repair. Restricting activity is a major responsibility for you, the pet owner. Failure to follow these instructions carefully can lead to delayed healing, even failure of the repair, or fractures of the bone.

The most common complication is delayed healing, where despite our best efforts to stabilize the joint, some individuals may respond more slowly than others.

Occasionally a pet may develop a small pocket of fluid, called a seroma, around the metal implant or ankle. Please call if the swelling is larger than a grape. If your pet is not using the leg somewhat by three weeks, please call to set up a recheck.

Additionally, if your pet starts using the leg and then stops, stops improving week by week, or worsens call to set up a recheck.

If you have any questions, please feel free to call RLAH at 715-234-4709

Follow Up Instructions:

1. Recheck with suture/staple removal in 12-14 days if needed.
2. Please return with your pet for recheck x-rays to be taken 10-12 weeks after the original surgery date.
3. Feed your pet its regular diet, but reduce it by 10% to allow for reduced activity and avoid weight gain.
4. Any abnormal swelling, redness, discharge, or odor near the incision should be checked immediately.