



Orthopedic Surgery Discharge Instructions

H&M VetSurg (Hani M Korani DVM, DACVS-SA)

The success of your pet's orthopedic surgery depends entirely on the care provided during the recovery period. **Strict adherence to these instructions is mandatory.** Please contact us immediately if you have any questions or concerns during this critical time.

1. Strict Confinement and Activity Restriction

The surgical site (bone, joint, or ligament) is highly vulnerable for the first **6 to 8 weeks** (or as otherwise specified by Dr. Korani).

- **Absolute Crate Rest:** Your pet must be kept in a small, secure crate or kennel **24 hours a day** for the entire specified confinement period.
 - This means **NO** running, jumping, playing, or roughhousing.
 - Your pet is only allowed out for brief, controlled bathroom breaks.
- **Stairs and Furniture: Block all access to stairs.** Your pet must be carried if stairs cannot be avoided. Prohibit jumping onto or off of furniture at all times.
- **Slippery Floors:** Restrict your pet to non-slip surfaces only (carpeted areas, non-slip mats, or rugs). A single slip on tile or hardwood can damage the repair.

2. Assisted Mobility and Weight Bearing

Supporting your pet's weight prevents excessive force on the repair site.

- **Sling Use:** Use the provided sling, harness, or towel to support your pet's torso while walking outside for bathroom breaks. This support is required for the entire period of strict rest.
- **Controlled Weight Bearing:** Allow the surgical limb to gently touch the ground, but you must continue to support the majority of your pet's weight, especially for hindlimb surgeries (e.g., TPLO, fracture repair). The goal is to encourage limited, balanced use without overloading the repair.

3. 🤕 Incision Site and Bandage Management

Incision care prevents infection, which is a severe complication following orthopedic surgery.

- **E-Collar is Mandatory:** The cone (E-collar) or recovery suit **must be worn 24 hours a day, 7 days a week** until the incision is completely healed and cleared (typically following the **14-day recheck**). Licking is the most common cause of incision failure and infection.
- **Keep it Clean and Dry: No bathing, swimming, or exposure to excessive moisture.**
- **Bandage or Cast Care (If Applicable):**
 - Keep the bandage **perfectly dry**. Wrap it in a plastic bag or cover when going outside.
 - **Check the exposed toes twice daily:** The toes should feel warm and not be excessively swollen. If the toes feel cold, if the bandage smells foul, or if you notice significant swelling, seek emergency veterinary attention immediately. **Do NOT attempt to remove the bandage yourself.**

4. 💊 Pain Management

Pain control is essential for your pet's comfort, but it must be managed carefully to prevent premature over-activity.

- **Administer Precisely:** Administer all prescribed pain medications and anti-inflammatory drugs **exactly as scheduled. Do not skip doses.**
- **Never Use Human Medication: Do NOT** give human pain medication (such as Advil, Aleve, or Tylenol) as these are toxic to pets.
- **Signs of Pain:** Call us if you notice persistent whining, restlessness, excessive panting when not hot, or sudden reluctance to move the limb even for assisted walks.

5. 📅 Follow-Up Schedule

The following appointments are mandatory to ensure healing progress:

- **Suture Removal Recheck (14 Days Post-Op):** Incision assessment and removal of external sutures/staples. This is the first time Dr. Korani may clear you to begin **Passive Range of Motion (PROM)** exercises.
- **Mandatory Radiograph Recheck (4–8 Weeks Post-Op):** New X-rays are taken to evaluate bone healing and implant stability. **No change in activity level can occur until Dr. Korani approves the X-rays.**

6. 🦴 Detailed Physical Rehabilitation (PT)

Physical Rehabilitation (PT) is key to restoring muscle mass and full function but must be done strictly in phases. **Do not begin any phase until explicitly cleared by Dr. Korani.**

Phase 1: Prevention of Stiffness (Cleared at 14 Days)

- **Goal:** Maintain soft tissue elasticity and joint range of motion (PROM) without stressing the repair.
- **Passive Range of Motion (PROM):** While your pet is lying comfortably on their side, gently flex and extend the joints of the affected limb. This should be done slowly and carefully. You will be instructed on the specific motions and repetitions.
 - **Crucial Rule:** Never move the joint past the point where your pet shows discomfort or resistance. This is pain, not stretching.

Phase 2: Controlled Weight Bearing (Cleared at 4–8 Weeks, Post-Radiograph)

- **Goal:** Safely encourage weight distribution and rebuild muscle mass.
- **Controlled Walks:** Begin extremely slow, controlled leash walks (e.g., 5 minutes, 3 times daily) on level ground.
- **Weight Shifting:** Practice assisted standing exercises where you gently shift your pet's weight back and forth onto the surgical limb.
- **Therapeutic Surfaces:** Walk over controlled, uneven surfaces (e.g., small towels or cushion mats) to enhance proprioception (awareness of the limb's position).

Phase 3: Advanced Strengthening (Cleared After 8 Weeks, Post-Radiograph)

- **Goal:** Introduce specific exercises to fully strengthen the musculature.
- **Activities:** This phase may include walking up slight inclines, walking backward, or low cavaletti poles, all done on a tight leash under supervision.
- **Crucial Warning: PT must be performed gently.** Performing exercises too early or too aggressively is the fastest way to damage the surgical repair and cause implant failure. Consult with a Certified Canine Rehabilitation Professional (CCRP) for best results.

7. Orthopedic Emergency Concerns

Call **H&M VetSurg** at **415-853-7600** or the nearest Veterinary Emergency Clinic immediately if you observe:

- **Sudden Inability to Bear ANY Weight** after initial, supervised progress.
- **Acute Implant Exposure:** Any implant (plate, screw, pin) is visible through the skin.
- **Severe Bandaging Issues** (cold, swollen, or foul-smelling toes).
- **Excessive Bleeding** or swelling around the incision.

Contact Information for H&M VetSurg

For questions related to the surgery or post-operative instructions provided by **Dr. Hani M Korani, DVM, DACVS-SA:**

- **Phone: 415-853-7600**
- **Email: hmvetsurg@gmail.com**