



Postoperative care of cats after Cranial Cruciate Ligament Surgery

Incision Care:

For the first 2 days after surgery you may see some oozing of blood from the incision – gently clean the area with hydrogen peroxide on a gauze sponge. The incision thereafter may have some redness, but should be dry, and over several days, the redness should decrease. Bruising and some swelling is perfectly normal and will resolve in most cases by the end of the first week. You should contact your veterinarian if the incision gaps open or if you notice a discharge from the wound. Do not allow your pet to chew or lick the incision. An Elizabethan collar may be necessary in order to prevent your pet from chewing at the sutures or licking the wound excessively.

Home Care and Exercise Restriction:

Anti-inflammatory medication and antibiotics will be prescribed for the first week following surgery.

The incision should be monitored for swelling, redness or discharge. Stitches or skin staples should be removed at 10-14 days.

Your cat should be kept inside, quiet and rested for a period of six weeks, with no jumping on or off furniture. Don't let your pet go up or down stairs. When you are not at home - keep in a crate, pen, small room - bedroom or utility room or bathroom. When you are at home, it is preferable to keep your pet under your direct control. It is OK if your pet wants to get on a sofa or the bed as long as there is no jumping.

After six weeks you can slowly and gradually begin to increase your cat's exercise until he/she returns to normal levels approximately sixteen weeks after surgery.

You may gently flex and extend your pet's knee joint 10-15 times, twice a day beginning 2 weeks after surgery. This may be easiest to perform while you are holding your cat in your lap and are seated. Start slowly and gradually work up to a point where your cat will tolerate having the knee flexed and extended through the full range of motion.

Stephen J. Van Lue, DVM, DACVS
svanlue@vanluevetsurg.com