



## **Post operative care of Dogs 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.

### **Exercise Restrictions:**

**WEEK 1:** 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 confined to a small area. It is absolutely essential to keep him/her on a LEASH when going to the bathroom. Going up and down stairs to go outside is OK as long as you have him/her on a leash. It is OK if your pet wants to get on a sofa or the bed as long as there is no jumping.

**WEEK 2:** The same as week 1, except that it is OK to let your pet do more in the house when you are home. This means he/she can follow you around, move at will from room to room. You must block off any stairs or area where he/she may gain access to the outside. No jumping, and no running to the doorbell on slick floors!

**WEEK 3:** The same as week 1-2 except, you can allow 5 minute leash walks; hold your pet back a little to force them to pull against you. This will allow them to start to toe touch or begin to use the leg. You can leash walk once or twice daily for 5 minutes each time. When you are not at home it is generally safe to allow your pet free access in the house- except you must block off stairs or avoid free access to the outdoors or areas where your pet may attempt to jump.

**WEEK 4:** The same as weeks 1-3 except you can allow swimming for 10-15 minutes once or twice daily. A pool will work best rather than a lake or beach. Do not allow your pet to jump in the water - assist him or her in or out. If you do not have the opportunity to allow swimming, continue with leash walking at 10-15 minutes twice daily. Swimming can be done in addition to walking or instead of it.

**WEEKS 5, 6 and 7:** The same as week 4, except you can allow swimming for 20-40 minutes once or twice daily and or leash walking for 20-40 minutes once or twice daily. **STILL NO OFF LEASH ACTIVITY!!**

WEEKS 8-12: We recommend a recheck at 8 weeks. Please contact your veterinarian to schedule this appointment. If healing is progressing, moderate increase in activity may be undertaken including slow jogging (gradually increasing the distance), playing while on a long leash, and as much swimming as desired. After this, your pet may gradually resume normal activity during weeks 12-16.

Stephen J. Van Lue, DVM, DACVS  
[svanlue@vanluevetsurg.com](mailto:svanlue@vanluevetsurg.com)