

Post-operative Information: Radius Fracture (Crosspin fixation)

Your pet has had a fracture of the radius and/or ulna (i.e. broken forearm) repaired with crosspins. This consists of metal pins that are surgically inserted into the bone that are bridging the fracture providing stability until the bone heals to its original strength. These patients MAY have their implants removed once the bone has healed sufficiently; it is generally unnecessary to put implants on the ulna, since this is a thin, non-weight bearing bone.

ACTIVITY RESTRICTION x 8 weeks

- Please keep your pet in a comfortable, safe indoor location with no free access to stairs for the next 24-48 hours as he/she recovers from anesthesia and surgery. Your pet may be groggy for the first few days. He or she may whine or appear more anxious than usual; this may indicate pain/discomfort or side-effects of the medications. Please call your veterinarian for assistance with medication adjustments or return for exam & additional pain medications as needed.
- Confine your pet to one level/section of the house on carpeted floors. Use baby gates, etc. to prevent access to slippery floors or stairs. Do not allow jumping on/off furniture. Confine to a small area/room/crate when unattended. Please do not allow any playing, running, jumping. For dogs, use a short leash when going outside to urinate/defecate.
- Your pet should start touching his/her toe down within the first 2 weeks. Thereafter, leg use should steadily improve each week. By 6 weeks, he/she should be 90% recovered. If he/she suddenly deteriorates or does not appear to be progressing well enough, please return to your veterinarian for exam; x-rays may be needed to diagnose the problem.
- Your pet will feel like fully using the leg before the bone is healed. Please continue restrictions during this difficult time when he/she is feeling "too" well! Failure to do so may cause serious healing problems.

INCISION CARE

- Do not allow your pet to lick or chew the incision or bandages as this can compromise the incision and predispose to infection. If necessary, please use an E-collar if you must leave your pet unattended. A large, tube sock with the toes cut off can also be pulled up over the apparatus to prevent self-trauma and bandage destruction.

PROGRESS EXAMS

- Please return for initial bandage change and wound evaluation with your veterinarian in 2-5 days. You may discuss at that time your comfort with at-home bandage management versus outpatient bandage care at your veterinary clinic.
- Return to your veterinarian every 7- 10 days for progress exams and bandage changes.

PHYSICAL THERAPY REGIMEN

- *Week 4:* Range of Motion Exercise-- Have your pet lie on his/her good side. Apply a warm compress to forearm. Grip the foot with one hand; slowly and gently push the foot up into flexion of all joints; hold for 5 seconds. Slowly pull the foot and push the leg down and back into full extension of all joints; hold for 5 seconds. *Focus on the wrist.* Repeat this motion 15-20 times twice daily. This exercise should not be performed to the point of pain or resentment. Continue 4 weeks.
- Swimming is wonderful rehabilitation exercise (for some dogs) when performed correctly. You may allow controlled swimming after all pins are removed. Controlled swimming requires that your pet not jump or leap into the water; walking into the water until it is deep enough to swim is required. Throwing balls to fetch often results in sudden jumping and lunging, which can cause serious problems in the healing phase. Do not over extend your pet; start with short excursions (5 minutes) and increase duration and frequency gradually.

LONG TERM LIFESTYLE

- After the fracture is fully healed, there are no restrictions on activities for your pet. A gradual return to full function should occur, to allow for a smooth return of muscle function and strength following the restricted period.