

## Bandage and Splint Care



One of the most useful and efficient ways to convey information to you about your pet is via the written word. We carefully craft these notes to give you helpful information and accurate expectations around your pet's surgical experience.

**Please read this.** *Please save it and read it during each stage of the recovery process.* Surprises make for a stressful time for everyone.

Photo and video examples may be found on our website: [www.directvetsurg.com](http://www.directvetsurg.com) in the Pet Owner Portal under "DVS Resources".

Your pet has had a bandage/splint applied to protect an injury or surgical site. Careful monitoring and maintenance is necessary for safe and effective bandage wear. Major problems can result from simple bandages; please do not hesitate to call if any problems are noted. Confirm that you know when the bandage is supposed to be removed.

### GENERAL INFORMATION

Please keep a note of your questions as you and your pet progress thru recovery and address them to your primary care veterinary team. Our surgery group will contact your primary care team on **Day 2** (after their phone follow-up with you) and **Day 14** (after your recheck visit with them) to check in on your pet's progress and see if you have had any concerns or questions. This method will maintain continuity in care and an accurate patient medical record.

### MONITORING

Please monitor the bandage for slipping or damage from chewing, etc. If it changes position or loses its integrity (i.e. section is chewed off), serious problems may occur with healing or new problems with pressure sores may develop. Please call if any changes in bandage position occur; we may need to replace the bandage.

If the bandage starts at the foot and the end of the bandage is open, check the two central toenails twice daily (i.e. look at or feel them). They should be close together. If they are spreading apart, this indicates toe swelling which can result in serious complications, and the bandage needs to be assessed by a veterinarian within 4-6 hours. Please call if any swelling is noted.

Please keep the bandage clean and dry. Place a plastic baggy on the end every time your pet goes outside. *Remove when indoors.*

If the bandage gets wet or you notice any bad odor coming from the bandage, it will need to be evaluated within 4-6 hours; serious skin problems may develop.

We strongly advised that you do not modify the bandage in any way. Adding tape or other wrappings can seriously compromise the safety of the bandage/splint. If you are concerned about the security or integrity of the bandage, please return for re-evaluation and reapplication as needed.

Check the bandage daily for these problems—look at/feel all edges where the bandage is close to the skin; if on the leg/foot, check toes for swelling/nails spreading apart; confirm it is in the same position as postoperatively; evaluate for wetness or damage. *If any changes or concerns, please take a photo and email to your primary care veterinary team with questions/concerns and ask for guidance.*

*\*\*Please know that bandages and splints can cause very serious complications. They are very effective treatment tools for better healing and pain control, but careful monitoring and appropriate follow-up must occur. If you have any questions or concerns related to issues outlined above or in general regarding bandage/splint wear, please do not hesitate to call your veterinarian or return for evaluation.\*\**

## PROGRESS EXAMS

Please return to your primary care clinic for bandage/splint evaluation or change every \_\_\_\_ **days**. Bandage wear will be evaluated and/or the bandage replaced, use of the limb will be assessed and any questions you have will be addressed.

It is important that regular bandage changes be performed to monitor for complications that can develop under a bandage. The foot sweats normally and will create a damp/warm environment under the bandage. “Athlete’s Foot”-type skin irritation (dermatitis) is common and somewhat tolerated and managed until the bandage can be removed.

## RESTRICTIONS

Avoid any rigorous activity while the bandage/splint is being used. For dogs, short, leashed walks to urinate/defecate are fine.

Minimal, supervised/assisted access to stairs is advised during restricted period. Use baby gates, etc. to prevent free access to stairs during this restricted period. When navigating

stairs (up and down), have a hand/leash on collar/harness and a leash/safety-strap under the belly to prevent slips, stumbles, falls.

Please use a short (~6ft), hand-held leash when outside to urinate/defecate. Confine your pet to a small area/room/crate when unattended. Please do not allow your pet to run, jump or play during this restriction period.

If your pet's personality-type challenges these restrictions, discuss options for medicinal-assistance for your pet to make restrictions easier to manage (i.e. Trazadone, Gabapentin, Tramadol, other).

### **Checklist:**

#### HOME MONITORING AND PROGRESS CHECK-IN WITH VETERINARY TEAM

- Pet attitude and appetite—Are these improving daily? What are your observations? What are your specific concerns?
- Pet mobility—Is this improving daily? What are your observations? What are your specific concerns?
- Incision health—Is redness and swelling going away? Is there discharge or moisture? (Photos taken close-up and at different angles are helpful for your primary care veterinary team.)
- Pet pain level—What are your observations? What are your specific concerns?
- Other

Based on your own experience through this, we welcome and encourage suggestions to this information that may help future patients and their people. Pay it forward! ([directvetsurg@gmail.com](mailto:directvetsurg@gmail.com))

--The DVS Crew