

## Juvenile Pubic Symphysiodesis



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 pubic symphysiodesis, which is a fusion of the normal pubic growth plate in the pelvis. This stops this growth plate from developing; it then acts as a tether, holding the pubis still as the rest of the upper portion of the pelvis "blossoms out" like wings as it continues to grow. The result is a better orientation of the "cup" of the hip joint (more roof-like) to capture and support the "ball" of the hip joint that was developing with too much looseness ("dysplasia"). The procedure is minimal, achieved through a small incision in the groin. During the next few months of puppy development, restriction to low-impact activities will be helpful in preventing joint deterioration (arthritis) while the pelvis matures.

### 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. **\*\*Use your checklist at the end of these notes to make these check-ins complete.\*\***

### First few days postop

#### MONITORING

Please keep your pet in a comfortable, safe, indoor location without free access to stairs for the next 24 hours as he/she recovers from anesthesia and surgery.

Your pet may be groggy for the next 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 primary care veterinary team for assistance with medication adjustments or return for exam and additional pain medications as needed.

Monitor appetite and attitude. *If both do not steadily improve over the next 2-3 days,* please call your primary care veterinary team or return for progress evaluation and problem-solving.

You can expect your pet to have a bowel movement within 5 days. Some animals take longer than others depending on when they last ate prior to surgery and when they started eating after surgery. It may be abnormal in color and consistency for 2-3 days. If you have any concerns, please speak with your primary care veterinary team.

Please confirm that your pet has urinated within 24 hours of returning home. If he/she does not, or you notice any problems related to urination, please speak with your primary care veterinary team.

Closely supervise your pet's movements over the first 3-4 days when s/he will be groggy from anesthetics and pain medications. Do not allow access to dangerous situations/locations (i.e. stairs, furniture, small children, other pets). Limit activities to necessary events only (on leash/out to go to the bathroom; access to food/water.)

Please look at the incision when you get home; knowing what "normal" looks like is helpful later when trying to understand if the incision is healing abnormally. Photos are helpful for you and us, when communicating from a distance.

## MEDICATIONS

It is likely that you have been prescribed one or more medications (given by mouth) for your pet over the first 2-3wks of recovery. During the discharge appointment or shortly thereafter, please make sure you understand:

- what each medication is being used to treat,
- what side-effects may develop, and
- whether or not the medication should be refilled and continued.

## BANDAGE CARE (IF PRESENT)

A clear, plastic bandaid may have been applied to the incision (Tegaderm). This will protect the incision from infection from the environment and a wayward pet tongue! It is useful for 2-3 days. You may remove it like a "bandaid" at any time.

## **Week 1-2 postop**

### MONITORING

Please look at the incision twice daily. It should be dry, slightly red along the margins, slightly swollen/thick on the edges with a light crust down the center. Over several days, it should lose redness and swelling.

Problems to call your veterinarian about:

- gapping (the edges should be exactly touching)
- ongoing or new discharge (other than small amount of crusting)
- swelling (other than slightly raised skin near edges).

Some bruising is normal and will resolve in 5-7 days.

The occasional patient will have more extensive bruising day 2-3. If this develops, please let your primary care veterinarian know; a visit or sending photos will help them characterize the issue and decide on a course of action. The vast majority of the time, this is a transient issue that will follow a typical 5-7 day course resolving.

Do not allow your pet to lick or chew the incision. Pets tend to want to lick early in the healing period and scratch later in the healing period; this can compromise the incision and predispose to infection. If necessary, please prevent access to the incision by using creative clothing options (ex. human boxer shorts, an E-collar or other devices, if you must leave your pet unattended. See [www.directvetsurg.com](http://www.directvetsurg.com), Pet Owner portal→Pet Links and DVS Resources

## PROGRESS EXAMS

Please return to your primary care clinic in 10-14 days for a progress exam. Skin healing will be evaluated, sutures (if present) will be removed, and any questions you have will be addressed. (Alternatively, you can schedule a remote progress exam to include a photo of the incision and a videoclip of your pet walking around the room. Include a brief summary for the veterinary team and any questions you have.)

Your pet should be walking normally within the first 2 weeks. Lameness from hip pain may still be present. If you notice a sudden deterioration in leg use at any time after surgery, please see your veterinarian for exam.

Please return for follow-up hip x-rays before your pet is 9mo old. (If additional hip dysplasia treatment is needed, frequent xray and exam monitoring keeps all options open.) It may be beneficial to have some oral tranquilizer/sedatives to use before your visit, since quality x-rays require careful patient positioning (and cooperation). Please discuss with your primary care veterinary team at least a week before your scheduled x-ray visit.

## DIET

The **most** beneficial and **least** expensive treatment for arthritis and joint health (and general health) over the lifetime of your pet is maintaining your pet on the lean/thin side of normal his/her whole life. Any orthopedic condition can progress with arthritis over time due to excessive, wear & tear; carrying less body weight will relieve some of this stress from the joints. Good parameters to monitor body condition are:

- 1) you should be able to feel the ribs and pelvic bones, but not see them;
- 2) your pet should have an "hour glass" figure when viewed from above looking down;
- 3) your pet should have a tucked-up belly when viewed from the side.

Glucosamine/chondroitin supplements ("chondroprotectants") may have some beneficial effects in patients with previous orthopedic injury, but this has not been clearly established. High-dose (medicinal dose) fish oil may improve comfort in arthritic joints longterm. You and your veterinarian should discuss whether or not these products would be helpful for your pet.

## RESTRICTIONS

Restrict your pet from any rigorous activity until 12mo of age. No running, jumping, playing. Walking on leash is fine. Slipping on floors and vigorous starts and stops (ball chasing, friend chasing) are hard on young, unstable hips.

Confine your pet, when unattended, to one level/section of the house on carpeted floors or crate confine. Rugs can be used to reduce the risk of slipping on slippery surfaces.

## Long-term lifestyle

If enough stability is achieved with the JPS, there are no long-term restrictions to your pet's lifestyle. If the hips remain too loose, additional surgical procedures might be beneficial either when still young (9-12mo) or later in life if arthritis pain develops.

### 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