

Postoperative Care Instructions for Intervertebral Disc Disease

Your pet has had a procedure with North Peninsula Veterinary Surgical Group called a hemilaminectomy to remove the ruptured disc material that was placing pressure on their spinal cord and causing neurologic symptoms (such as weakness in the hind limbs). Please keep in mind that it will take a significant amount of time for your pet to recover from the initial trauma and the following surgery. The majority of patients will see dramatic improvements 6-8 weeks after the procedure. It is important to allow your pet time to heal, avoiding possible injury while they recover. Please keep this in mind and strictly follow the postoperative care instructions here.

Activity

- Absolutely no running or jumping, unsupervised use of stairs, or playing roughly with any pets or children.
- All toileting and time outside must be done on-leash.
- Avoid access to slippery floors such as hardwood and stairs.
- Plan to restrict your pet's activity for the next 8 weeks. This includes visits outside three times a day for toileting purposes only. You may need to carry your pet outside to place them for toileting.
- Use a belly sling (such as a rolled towel) to help support their back end during toileting until their ability to walk is nearly normal.
- Keep an eye on the tops of their feet for abrasions since they often drag them before regaining movement and proprioception. You may want to consider socks or booties, but only for the time that they are outside to avoid irritation.

Incision Site

- Monitor the surgical site daily for infection. This can present as swelling, redness, discharge or signs of sudden pain to the touch. Call us immediately if you notice any of these.
- Keep the surgery site clean and dry. Do not apply any ointments or other treatments. No bathing or swimming for 14 days after the procedure.

Medications

- Make sure you have a plan to give all medications as directed, including reminders where necessary. Call us if you believe your pet may be having a poor reaction to any of their medications.

Food & Water

- Make sure your pet has ready access to water and their regular food.



Recovery Trajectory

- You can generally expect your pet to have a slow but steady recovery. If you notice that your pet is lethargic, experiencing more pain or seems generally unwell, please call us immediately.
- You must monitor them to ensure that they're urinating at least once every 24 hours. If they are not, seek immediate medical care.

Bladder Expression

- At the beginning of your pet's recovery from a ruptured disc, they may require manual bladder expression. To do this, place your hands on either side of their abdomen and apply gradually increasing pressure inward and downward. Perform this procedure 3-5 times every day until they no longer require assistance. If you are unable to perform the procedure, please contact us for help.
- Failing to express their bladder on a daily basis can lead to bladder atony, which could cause permanent incontinence.
- Failing to express their bladder may also lead to urinary tract infections. Check for dark discolorations, foul odors or difficulties expressing their urine. If you note any of these signs, call us immediately.

Physical Therapy

- Your pet will need physical therapy at home 3-5 times per day. Plan to spend 5-10 minutes for each session.
- Help your pet stand up squarely on all 4 legs, providing as much support as they require. Make sure their back paws are flat on the floor (they may have a tendency to flip over). Gradually reduce the amount of support your hand provides to encourage them to stand on their own.
- For passive range of motion exercises, gently flex your pet's hind leg in a bicycle motion while supporting their back end with your other hand. Perform on both sides.

Follow-up Appointment

- We will schedule a follow-up appointment to remove sutures and/or staples 10 to 12 days after the procedure. At that time, we will discuss additional appointments as necessary.
- We will also schedule an additional follow up appointment to assess your pet's neurologic functioning. At that time we will discuss further recommendations for allowed activities at home. Please reach out to us before this exam if you feel that your pet is experiencing difficulties or if they are not improving.





Dr. Kimberly Carlson
NORTH PENINSULA VETERINARY SURGICAL GROUP
650.513.6660
dr Carlson@npvsg.com
251 N Amphlett Blvd San Mateo, CA 94401
npvsg.com

Long Term Considerations

- Please keep in mind that your pet will always be at risk for additional disc ruptures. We will discuss limitations and recommendations for allowed activities.

We're here to help throughout your pet's recovery, please do not hesitate to call us with any questions or concerns.

