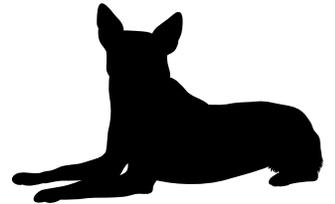


Westbrook Animal Hospital

Post-Surgery Recovery Instructions: Canine ACL Repair (ELSS/ECLS Technique)

Thank you for trusting Westbrook Animal Hospital to care for your pet. To ensure a smooth recovery following your dog's ACL repair using the Extracapsular Lateral Suture Stabilization (ELSS/ECLS) technique, please follow these detailed guidelines. If you have any questions or concerns, don't hesitate to contact us at **(207) 797-4747** or via email at **westbrookah@gmail.com**.



1. General Post-Surgical Care

- Monitoring Behavior:** Your dog may be groggy or disoriented for 24-48 hours due to the effects of anesthesia and sedation. Some dogs may vocalize, pant, or seem restless as they wake up. This is usually temporary, but contact us if the behavior persists or worsens.
- Non-Weight Bearing:** Your dog will likely avoid putting weight on the operated leg for 1-2 weeks. This is normal as they begin the healing process. Gradual weight-bearing should occur between **2-4 weeks post-surgery** as discomfort decreases and strength returns.
- Appetite:** Reduced appetite is common for the first day. You can offer bland food (e.g., boiled chicken and rice) in small amounts if your pet seems uninterested in eating their normal diet. Gradually offer your dog their normal diet as their appetite returns to normal. If appetite does not improve after 24-48 hours, contact us.
- Water Access:** Ensure fresh water is available. Monitor your dog's intake to ensure proper hydration after the procedure.



2. Incision & Bandage Care

- Check the Incision:** Inspect the surgical site daily if unbandaged for redness, swelling, discharge, or foul odor. Slight bruising or swelling is normal, but report any significant changes.
- Bandage Care:** If a bandage was applied it may fall off soon after arriving home, especially given the location on the leg, this is normal. If your dog is leaving the leg alone (and there are no other pets to disturb the area), it is safe to leave it unbandaged unless

told otherwise by our veterinary staff. If you feel a new bandage is needed or if you were instructed to call if bandage comes off, contact us for assistance.

•**Prevent Licking:** Use the provided e-collar (cone) or a surgical recovery sleeve/suit to prevent licking or chewing at the incision.



3. Strict Rest Guidelines

Strict rest is crucial for the success of the surgery. Any excessive activity could damage the repair or delay healing.

•**First 2 Weeks:**

- Confine your dog to a small, safe area such as a crate or gated-off room.
- No running, jumping, climbing stairs, or rough play.
- Leash only for bathroom breaks. Use a sling or towel under your dog's belly to support the hind end if needed.

•**Weeks 3-4:**

- Gradually increase leash time to 5-10 minutes, 2-3 times daily or as needed for bathroom breaks.
- Continue to restrict high-energy activities such as running, playing, and climbing stairs.

•**Weeks 5-8:**

•Increase controlled leash walks to 10-15 minutes, gradually introducing slight inclines or uneven surfaces to build strength.

- Avoid off-leash activity until cleared.



•**Beyond 8 Weeks:**

•With your veterinarian's approval, you can start slowly reintroducing more normal activity, such as short periods of supervised off-leash time. Running, jumping, and play should be avoided until at least 12 weeks post-surgery.

4. Pain Management & Medications

- Pain Relief & Anti-Inflammatories:** Administer prescribed medications exactly as directed. Never give over-the-counter medications unless approved by your veterinarian.

- Antibiotics:** If provided, complete the full course to prevent infection.

- Monitor for Side Effects:** Contact us if your dog experiences vomiting, diarrhea, or other unusual reactions to medications.

5. Weight Management & Joint Supplements



- Weight Management:**

- For overweight dogs, weight loss is essential to reduce strain on the repaired knee and prevent future injuries. Feed a calorie-controlled diet and avoid treats unless approved.

- Ask us about prescription weight-loss diets if needed.

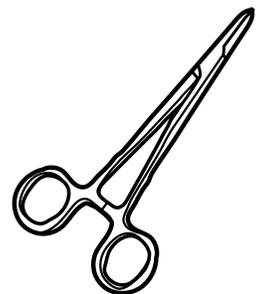
- Joint Supplements:**

We recommend the following supplements to support joint health and healing:

- Glucosamine and Chondroitin** (e.g., Dasuquin, Cosequin): Promotes cartilage repair and joint health.

- Omega-3 Fatty Acids** (e.g., fish oil): Helps reduce inflammation and promote healing.

Ask us about specific products and dosing recommendations for your dog.



6. Rehabilitation Techniques

Rehabilitation is key to regaining strength and mobility. These exercises should be introduced at specific stages:

- Weeks 1-2 (Passive Recovery):**

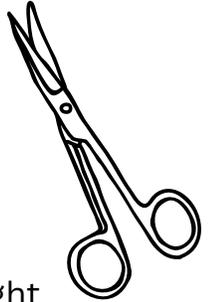
•**Ice Therapy:** Apply a cold pack wrapped in a cloth to the surgical site for 10-15 minutes, 2-3 times daily, to reduce swelling.

•**Massage:** Gently massage the muscles around the affected leg to improve circulation and reduce stiffness.

•**Weeks 3-4 (Early Activity):**

•**Range-of-Motion Exercises:** With your dog lying on their side, slowly and gently move the affected leg in a natural bending and straightening motion. Perform 10 repetitions, 2-3 times daily.

- **Massage:** Gently massage the muscles around the affected leg to improve circulation and reduce stiffness.



•**Weeks 5-8 (Strength Building):**

•**Leash Walks:** Gradually increase leash time on even terrain. Introduce slight inclines or grassy areas for added resistance.

•**Sit-to-Stand Exercises:** Encourage your dog to sit and then stand up slowly. Perform this 5-10 times daily to strengthen the leg muscles.

•**Weeks 8+ (Advanced Recovery):**

•**Cavaletti Walks:** Set up low obstacles or poles for your dog to step over at a slow pace.

•**Hydrotherapy:** If possible, swimming or walking in shallow water can build strength while minimizing stress on the joints.

7. Watch for Warning Signs

Contact us immediately if you notice:

- Signs of pain or distress despite medication.
- Excessive swelling, redness, or discharge from the incision.
- Limping or refusal to bear weight on the leg beyond 4 weeks.
- Persistent lethargy or lack of appetite beyond 48 hours.
- Vomiting, diarrhea, or other adverse reactions to medications.

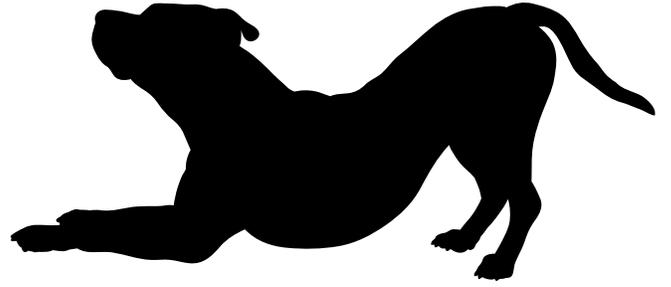


Contact Us

For questions or concerns, please reach out:

•**Phone:** (207) 797-4747

•**Email:** westbrookah@gmail.com



If your dog's bandage or protective device needs replacement, or you have any questions about their recovery, don't hesitate to call. For after-hours emergencies, contact your nearest emergency veterinary clinic.

We're committed to helping your pet recover comfortably and successfully. Thank you for being a part of the Westbrook Animal Hospital family!

Westbrook Animal Hospital 

Caring for your pets as if they were our own.