This form contains information about what to expect after your dog has had a cruciate repair and/or patella surgery. We hope that this can better prepare you for your dog’s recovery and answer questions you may have. This form is a general guideline as to what is normal after surgery. Please understand that your dog may heal faster or slower than what is indicated. Contact your veterinarian if your dog experiences either decrease in function, or significant increase in pain during the recovery phase.

Thank you.

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**Phase I (0-10 days after surgery)**

- **First 24-48 hours**
  - Patella surgery patients will have a bandage on their leg for the first 5 days.
    - Please keep bandage clean and dry. A bag should be placed over bandage when going outside and removed shortly after coming inside.
    - Please check toes (exposed at bottom of bandage) daily for swelling.
  - It is normal for your dog to experience discomfort and refuse to urinate or have bowel movements as often as they normally do.
  - Walking on 3 legs and/or walking with the surgical leg slightly touching the ground is normal at this point.
  - Assistance with a sling may be necessary at this time.
  - An increase in bruising and swelling may occur.
  - Please check the incision daily for excessive swelling, discharge, or redness. (for patella repairs, check incision after the bandage is removed)
    - Make sure your dog is not licking or biting the incision.
  - **Ice application**
    - An ice pack can be applied to your dog’s knee every 4-6 hours for 15-20 minutes to help control pain and inflammation.
      - Using a barrier (e.g. thin towel) is necessary between the ice pack and skin if using a commercial gel pack.

- **Activity**
  - Activity should consist of short leash walks for elimination only.
  - When unsupervised, confinement is necessary either in a cage or small area.
    - Your dog is allowed to slowly walk around the house with direct supervision as long as it is not constant.
  - No running, jumping, or playing at this time. Stairs and slick floors (e.g. tile and wood) are discouraged, however, if these areas cannot be avoided please assist your dog to prevent falling.

- **After 5 days** (Patella bandage is removed by a technician 3 days after surgery)
  - If no swelling is evident, a warm moist heating pack can be applied followed by a gentle massage of the leg.
  - Passive range of motion can be started
    - Very slowly bend and straighten your dogs knee 5 times. Repeat 2-3 times a day. *If your dog resists you, please discontinue at this time*
RECHECK WITH YOUR SURGEON IN 12-14 DAYS

Phase II (10-30 days after surgery)

- **Appearance**
  - The surgical leg is used 80-100% of the time when walking at a slow pace.
  - Most dogs still shift their weight off of their surgical leg when standing.
  - By 2-3 weeks after surgery, all dogs should be using the surgical leg when walking. A rehabilitation program should be initiated at this time if your dog is not using the leg very well. Please contact the rehabilitation department below for further assistance.
    - Kelly Hatton or Emily Alfonsi at North Macomb Canine Rehabilitation and Conditioning (located at Wilson Vet Hospital).
      - 586-322-4454 or northmacombk9rehab@gmail.com
- **Activity**
  - Heat can be continued as directed.
  - Passive range of motion is increased to 10 repetitions, 2-3 times a day.
  - Please start slow, controlled leash walks for 5 minutes three times a day.
    - Walks can be increased by 1-2 minutes every week as tolerated.

**RECHECK WITH YOUR SURGEON AT 30 DAYS**

Phase III (30-60 days after surgery)

- **Appearance**
  - The surgical leg should be used 100% of the time with minimal limp when walking slowly.
    - Your dog may still slightly favor the leg while standing or walking at a fast pace.
  - Muscle tone in surgical leg should be close to equal with the non-surgical leg.
- **Activity**
  - Walking can be increased to 10 minutes three times a day.
    - Increase walks by 1-2 minutes every week as tolerated.
- **Physical Rehabilitation**
  - A physical rehabilitation program can be initiated at this time for dogs that need extra help with strengthening, improvements with balance, reconditioning, or weight loss.
  - Please contact the rehabilitation department. (See information above)

Phase IV (Greater than 60 days after surgery)

- **Appearance**
  - Surgical leg should be used 100% of the time with minimal to no limp when walking slowly.
    - Favoring of leg with standing and walking at a fast pace should be minimal.
- **Activity**
  - Continue to increase walking as tolerated.
  - Off leash time can be started at 5-10 minutes a day and gradually increase as tolerated.
  - Please avoid aggressive off leash movements such as chasing animals, retrieving toys, and playing with other dogs.
    - These activities can be slowly introduced 3 months after surgery.