**Surgical Discharge Instructions for Dogs**

Your dog has undergone major surgery and is now being discharged for continued care at home. Your job during the recovery period at home is just as important as the surgical procedure just performed.

**What special instructions should I follow after my dog comes home?**

Home care after surgery mainly involves the **restriction of physical activity.** Unfortunately, your dog does not understand the seriousness of surgery or the significance of the recovery period. Most dogs will naturally become very active in a short period of time after surgery and confinement and close supervision indoors is of the utmost importance! This means:

* No jumping or running, even on and off of furniture
* No stair climbing
* No playing with other pets
* No 'rough-housing'

When your dog goes outside to go to the bathroom, it must be on a short leash and returned indoors **immediately.** You may only take your dog for very short, slow leash walks for two weeks, or as instructed by your veterinarian. Carry your dog up and down the stairs to get to your yard. For larger dogs, it’s okay to walk down the stairs on a leash, as long as it is a slow walk.

If your dog must be left alone, it must be confined to a cage or other **small area that is warm and safe**. This strict confinement and restriction of activity is necessary during the entire recuperative period. **Excessive physical activity often leads to injury or serious complications.** This means additional expense to you and added discomfort and risk for your dog.

**How should I care for the incision?**

Do not bathe your dog or allow the incision to get wet. This also means that you cannot allow your dog to lick the incision at all. Your dog must wear an e-collar (cone) for a minimum of 2 weeks or as directed by the veterinarian.

Monitor the incision daily for signs of redness, swelling, discharge, or excessive licking. Some swelling, mild bruising and clear, reddish discharge from the incision is normal for 3-5 days. Prevent your pet from pawing, rubbing, licking, or traumatizing the surgery site. After the first 3-5 days, the swelling and redness should subside and the incision should look better each day. Moderate swelling on or around the incision site is not normal, and may be an early sign of infection. For routine elective surgeries, any discharge from the incision site is abnormal.

Never put anything on the incision unless you are specifically told to do so by your veterinarian. Never put hydrogen peroxide or rubbing alcohol on the incision. These chemicals are toxic to healing tissues, and will cause inflammation and delay the surgical healing.

Call Twin Peaks Veterinary Clinic if you observe any abnormalities or if you have any questions or concerns about your dog's progress.

BANDAGE CARE:

If your pet has a bandage, it should be kept clean and dry. Please notify Twin Peaks immediately of any soiled, wet, or ripped bandage. If not attended to quickly, there could be significant consequences to your pet’s health.

**My dog keeps licking the incision. What should I do?**

A protective collar called Elizabethan collar (E-collar or cone) must be worn to keep your dog from licking the incision site. Licking often leads to chewing or removal of sutures (stitches), which can happen in a few seconds. Mild licking can result in an infection that requires antibiotic treatment. However, persistent licking can cause serious injury to the incision and may require a costly surgery to repair the damage.

In general, your dog should gradually improve each day. If your dog's condition changes or suddenly worsens, please call your Twin Peaks Veterinary Clinic as soon as possible. Your goal by following these post-operative instructions is to help your dog return to a normal and pain free life as soon as possible.

The above discharge instructions have been fully explained to me. I understand that I, as the owner, play an important role in the successful post-operative recovery of my pet. I understand that failure to follow the above guidelines may result in severe complications that require additional care and/or surgery. I understand that additional care will have additional cost to me. Complications will also prolong recovery, delay healing, and cause undue discomfort to my pet.

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Signature of Owner Date