



Stitches? Surgery?

Four ways to promote healing at home

It's hard to remember all veterinary instructions after your pet has had surgery or a soft-tissue trauma, but it's important for proper healing once you're home.

It can be a little overwhelming when you get a list of dos and don'ts before you take your pet home after a procedure at the veterinary clinic. But you want your pet to heal quickly and properly, so always follow all instructions from your veterinarian. The following are four things you must do to promote care at home—but never hesitate to call the clinic if you need to go over instructions again, have any questions or want to share observations or concerns about your pet's condition.

Elizabethan collar

Do not let your pet lick at the wound. Licking at the wound does not promote healing and will almost certainly make it worse. Take advantage of the Elizabethan collar offered to you at the veterinary clinic. Although your pet may have a dramatic reaction to it in the beginning and may seem to hate it, keep the Elizabethan-collar on at all times, even overnight as the pet sleeps. Your pet will get used to the E-collar and even learn to eat and drink with it on.

Bandages

It is important to keep bandages clean and dry. Make sure to bring your pet back in for bandage changes whenever

the veterinary clinic schedules it or if the bandage gets dirty or wet. Always monitor the bandage and the area around it. For example, if a lower leg or toes underneath a bandage appear swollen—it can be an emergency.

Medications

Give any and all antibiotic and pain medication exactly as prescribed by your veterinarian. Do not skip doses. It may help to set your phone alarm as a reminder to give them. Antibiotics are much less effective and may even contribute to bacterial resistance if not given as directed.

Pain is cumulative. To keep your pet as comfortable as possible, it is better to stay out in front of pain and inflammation by giving the pain medications as directed.

Exercise

Only let your pet do what it's allowed to do. If your veterinarian says leash walking only, do not put your dog out in the backyard unsupervised—your pet may overexert himself. If your pet is advised not to climb stairs, carry your pet up and down the stairs if necessary.

Keep your veterinary clinic's number handy and call with any questions, observations or concerns.