HIP LUXATION SURGERY: At Home Care

At home patient care after hip luxation surgery is critical to the success of the surgery. Allowing your pet too much activity may lead to early failure of the implants, which means the hip can re-luxate, usually necessitating a revision surgery. A normal hip joint is held together by a large "round ligament" and the joint capsule, which is a tough fibrous tissue. When a hip becomes dislocated, both of these tissues are torn and damaged. The round ligament is replaced with a prosthetic material. The joint capsule is sutured back together, if possible. Sometimes it is augmented with sutures and bone anchors. Over time, this artificial ligament will break, but the scar tissue that forms during the healing process will hold the joint in a normal position. If you allow your pet too much activity in the first few weeks, the suture will break prematurely before enough scar tissue forms allowing the joint to dislocate again. At that point, a second surgery will be needed to remove the end of the femur and allow a false joint to form. To avoid the added expense of a second surgery, it is imperative that you follow these instructions very carefully. The following instructions will be your guide to home care:

**Week 1:**
- Apply an ice-pack to the hip for 10 to 15 minutes two to four times a day for the first 48 hours after surgery
- If inflammation has resolved after 72 hours, apply a hot-pack to the hip for 10 to 15 minutes two or three times a day
- Keep your pet confined to a bathroom or small kennel with just enough room to lay down and have a bowl of food and water. Ensure the floor isn’t slippery, if it is, put down rugs or mats.
- Put a towel or leash around your pet’s abdomen just in front of the back legs so you can support their weight while taking them outside two or three times daily to go to the bathroom. **DO NOT** allow them to walk on the affected leg with full weight for the first week.
- No running, jumping, playing, free roaming of the house or yard, and no stairs.

**Weeks 2 & 3:**
- Apply a hot pack to the hip for 10 to 15 minutes two or three times a day until the swelling has resolved
- Schedule a recheck with your vet 10 days after surgery to remove any sutures and evaluate range of motion and percent weight bearing
- Most patients begin to bear some weight by week 2, but every pet is different and some may take longer
- Continue house and leash restriction for weeks 2 and 3, but the abdominal sling is no longer necessary

**Week 4:**
- Start slow leash walks for 10 minutes two or three times daily
- If available, swimming exercises for one to three minutes twice a day is helpful

**Weeks 5-6:**
- Schedule another recheck with your vet six weeks after surgery to evaluate your pet’s progress
- Take your pet on leash walks for 20 to 30 minutes once a day, slow enough to ensure that your pet is weight bearing on the affected limb
- Continue swimming if possible

**Weeks 7:**
- At this point, your pet’s healing should be complete and should
HIP LUXATION SURGERY: At Home Care

gradually return to full activity by
the end of 8 weeks.
- Take your pet on faster 30 to 40
minute walks once or twice a day.

Additional Instructions:
Licking at the incision should be
discouraged because it may lead to
chewing at the sutures causing a wound
infection. It may be necessary to use an
Elizabethan collar to prevent licking. Feed
your pet its regular diet but reduce it by
10% to allow for reduced activity.

Complications
As with any surgical procedure,
complications can occur. Unlike human
patients who can use a sling or crutches,
our patients do not know enough to stay off
a healing leg so restricted activity is a
major responsibility of you, the pet owner.
The most common complication is re-
luxation of the hip, where, despite our best
efforts, the hip just will not stay in place.
Rarely, infections can develop and will need
to be treated with antibiotics. Notify your
veterinarian if you notice any discharge
from the incision. Lastly, some pets will
develop significant arthritis in the hip that
may necessitate further surgery. If you have
any questions, please feel free to ask your
veterinarian.

Re-examination
Re-examination is advised in 4 days (sooner
if you are concerned) to:
- Remove the dressing
- Remove the fentanyl patch
- Examine the wound.
There is often some bruising and swelling
around the surgery site; this is normal and
should resolve uneventfully. Please make
an appointment for final assessment in
about 6 weeks; we will assess the degree of
recovery and discuss the rehabilitation
exercise program then.

Medications
- Anti-inflammatory: ________________
  Label instructions on the packet
  should be followed.
- Analgesic patch (fentanyl). This will
  be removed at the 4 day recheck.
- Tramadol tablets - Label
  instructions on the packet should be
  followed.

Post-operative exercise
Strict rest (no free exercise allowed) for the
next 6 weeks is necessary to allow healing,
even if your pet feels capable of more
activity – any early overuse of the limb can
result in failure of the surgery, which in
some cases necessitates revision surgery.
This means your pet should be confined to
a small room or run for the duration of this
period. This includes no jumping (including
into and out of cars) and definitely no
stairs! Please try to keep your pet on flat
surfaces only, and preferably not on
slippery surfaces e.g. tiles and polished
floors. If this is unavoidable, then consider
putting rugs down or non-slip matting.

Prognosis
Your pet has a good chance of improvement
in lameness. Most patients make an
excellent recovery within three to six
months of surgery. It is most important not
to allow your pet to become overweight
and to maintain a reasonable level of
fitness. If you have any questions or
concerns, please don’t hesitate to contact us.

Please care for your pet as directed and
please return to see us any time during your
pet’s recovery if you are at all concerned
about the wound healing.

Small Animal Surgery
smallanimalsurgery.com.au
HIP LUXATION SURGERY: At Home Care

Animal Physiotherapists with Hydrotherapy

Animal Physiotherapy Solutions
Lindsey Connell
14 The Centre at Springwood
Corner of Lexington & Logan Roads
Underwood QLD 4119 Australia
http://vss.net.au/services/physiotherapy/

Brooke Marsh
431 Tanawha Tourist Drive
Tanawha, QLD 4556
Sunshine Coast
Australia
www.ncvs.net.au/3662_Therapists.html

Hydrotherapy

The Canine Fitness Centre
3385 6090
583 Oakey Flat Rd, Morayfield, 4506
www.caninefitnesscentre.com.au

Mobile Rehabilitation Therapist

Alpha Mobility Solutions
Dr Laurence Oner
Based in Petrie QLD 4502
0421 169 107
info@alphamobility.com.au
www.alphamobility.com.au