

Patella Luxation (Dislocating knee cap) – Ridgestop Surgery

Normally your dog will start using their leg 3 to 4 days after surgery, and slowly improve over the following 3 to 4 weeks. There is some individual variation on how soon your dog will return to full function – this is suspected to be them getting used to the new biomechanical state of the knee joint, and to the implant itself. Occasionally some swelling is seen post-operatively around the knee joint due to fluid accumulation (seroma) – this usually resolves without incident after a few weeks.

Post-operative home care

Pain Relief – This is given before, during, and after surgery. For use at home we dispense Rimadyl for two weeks and Pardale for five days.

Ice Pack – Apply an ice pack four to six times daily, as long as your dog does not resent this. Wrap the ice pack in a tea towel and apply to the inside of the leg at knee level. Initially wrap the ice pack in a couple of layers of the towel and leave on for just one or two minutes. Once your dog is used to this, apply the ice pack for four or five minutes within a single layer of towel.

Exercise

Following Ridgestop surgery it is important that your dog's activity is restricted and regulated.

Avoid all slippery surfaces (such as laminate floors), stairs, and any form of jumping.

For the first couple of days you can take your dog out to the garden on a lead to go to the toilet, but then straight back in.

When you are with your dog, they can potter about freely as long as they are on carpets/non slip floors and are not able to jump up onto chairs etc.

When unsupervised, your dog must be left in either a collapsible kennel or a small room (maximum dimensions of 3m x 3m).

We do like to start controlled exercise fairly soon after the surgery to sustain muscle bulk and good joint movement.

From day 3 onwards, slow controlled lead walks in the garden are recommended. Start with only 5 minutes twice daily. Ideally have your dog on your right hand side if the right knee was operated on, or have your dog on your left if the left knee was operated on.

From one week after surgery, exercise can gradually be increased if your dog seems comfortable. Add 5 minutes to the time of each walk, and increase by this amount every 5 days or so.

After week 2 you can also increase the frequency of walks, going out 3 or 4 times daily. Please note that 3 or 4 shorter walks are far preferable to one longer walk.

Physiotherapy

Passive range of motion exercises (with the emphasis on passive!) can be very helpful too. These exercises involve gentle extension and flexion of the knee. From two weeks after surgery, this should be done 2 or 3 times a day, with 10 slow gentle repetitions. Again if your dog is happy to allow it, gentle massage of the quadriceps muscles above the knee for 5 minutes before these passive movements is also helpful.