



Palmetto

VETERINARY SPECIALIST

Fractured bone

Bones are the scaffold on which the muscles are applied. The bones allow the movement through the contracture of the muscles. When a bone is fractured, the muscles contract and the ability to move the affected limb is lost. Repair of the fracture is performed to return use of the limb. Fractures occur from falls, vehicular trauma, gun shots and bite wounds.

Fracture repair

Rigid fixation is needed to allow the bone to heal. The fracture is repaired with plates applied to the surface of the bone to hold it in the original anatomic position. Bone require 8 to 10 weeks to heal after being fractured. This time is spent under confinement, ideally to a crate or small room, with leash controlled activity.

Postoperative care

Postoperative confinement is critical to have a successful outcome. Your dog needs 10 weeks of confinement to allow the soft tissues and the bone to heal. If your dog is used to a crate, this would be ideal. Most dogs are not crate trained at this stage of their life. An alternative is an expandable play pen, home office or laundry room. This prevents your dog from running to the front door when the doorbell rings, hopping on the couch/bed and being rambunctious with your other pets. When they are taken outside, your dog should be on a leash and under control at all times. Please restrict free access to flights of stairs and do not allow your dog to play with other dogs or run off leash for 10 weeks after surgery. Controlled post activity allow for two objectives to met - one is the soft tissues have time to reinforce themselves and to get used to their new tissue loads. The second objective is for the bone to heal. The fractured bone heals through load sharing with the implants and the bone. Load sharing is a balance between the implants and the bone. If the repair was too strong the bone would not heal. Confinement and leash activity will reduce the likelihood of overloading the implants. Failure to keep the patient confined could cause the implants to fail, resulting in failure of the fracture repair. and an additional surgery. Radiographs will be taken at 8 to 10 weeks to evaluate healing of the fracture. Once the fracture has healed, their activity will gradually be increased back to normal activity over 4 weeks.