



Arthrodesis

About Arthrodesis

Arthrodesis, which means fusion of the joint, is a salvage procedure indicated for patients with acute or chronic instability of the joint, irreparable fractures or ligament trauma near the joint, or chronic and painful osteoarthritis. The purpose of arthrodesis is to provide a functional leg without a painful joint. However, following this procedure, the joint will no longer be mobile, and your pet will walk with a 'straight' foot or leg, unable to flex or extend.

The Surgical Procedure – Arthrodesis

The procedure involves approaching to the affected joint, removal of the cartilage, and stabilisation of the joint with a plate and screws. A bone graft is then placed in the area of the joint. By doing so, the body is 'tricked' and thinks that the joint is actually a 'fracture'. Naturally, the body will try to 'fix' the fracture and heal it.

Complications - of this type of surgery include slow healing, lack of healing, implant failure, infection etc. Most common one is infection. Most of these complications can be managed with/without surgery. Obviously, should complication occur, a personalised plan of action will be created for your pet.



The Aftercare - Please read this form carefully

Arthrodesis is a significant procedure, and adhering closely to these instructions is crucial for achieving the best possible outcome. From the body's perspective, an arthrodesis is an 'abnormality'. Therefore, the postoperative care is even more important than for other surgeries.



Exercise restrictions

During the initial 12 weeks of healing, only slow LEAD toilet walks are allowed.





Information sheet - Arthrodesis



During the first 2 weeks, slow lead walks of 5 minutes three times a day are allowed. Walks should increase by 5 minutes per walk every subsequent week

Trotting should be avoided as it intensifies forces on the surgery site. Running and jumping must be avoided entirely as they can lead to acute surgical failure. Slippery surfaces and stairs should also be avoided as they can stress the implants. Dogs should experience good comfort levels immediately after surgery and should start using the leg consistently within 1-3 days. It's the owner's responsibility to prevent excessive exercise.



Wound Care

Sutures are usually resorbable, under the skin and there is no need to be removed. Protect the surgical site with an Elizabethan collar for 14 days to prevent self-trauma. Clean, dry, and odour-free surgical wounds are expected, contact your vets if you notice any discharge or swelling.



Medications

Your dog will be sent home with anti-inflammatories, painkillers and antibiotics. It's essential to adhere to the instructions provided. Please report any vomiting, diarrhea, or other unusual changes to your veterinarian immediately.



Recheck with your vet

Checkups with your vet are recommended on day 3, day 10, week 4, week 6, and week 12 postoperatively.

Follow-up X-rays are needed at 6 and 12 weeks postoperatively to evaluate the metal implants and joint fusion. Your vets will share the X-rays with us for careful evaluation. If complications occur, follow-up X-rays will allow us to act quickly, preventing the situation from becoming disastrous. If there are no complications at the 12-week follow-up, a gradual return to exercise is allowed.

