

Dressing care

It is very important to keep the bandage clean and dry.

Use a protective covering over the bandage when your pet goes outside, especially if it is wet (a plastic bag or Mikki boot is best). Promptly remove this on returning inside to avoid excessive sweating within the dressing. Use tape to secure any protective covering - never use elastic bands!

Restrict your pet's activity and encourage it to rest. Dogs should be taken for short lead walks only and cats should be kept inside.

The Function of a Bandage

Your pet may go home with a bandage or dressing to provide support or protection for the following:

- Stop self-trauma of a wound while healing.
- Protect a wound from the environment.
- Support a fracture.
- Reduce contamination of a wound.
- Give comfort and pain relief of sprains, strains and sometimes dislocations whether or not there is a wound present. The bandage needs to be secure, comfortable, firm and applied properly to allow the tissues underneath to 'breathe'.

Bandage Problems

These can occur surprisingly easily due to the nature and lifestyles of our pets. The main problems that occur:

- The bandage becomes wet or soiled - this reduces ventilation through the bandage. If left on for an extended period of time the tissues underneath can become macerated and infected, turning a minor problem into a major one. This is why your post-operative check-ups are very important.
- The bandage slips - If this occurs it will no longer offer support. The most likely causes of this will be over activity of the pet or it has chewed or licked at the dressing. Occasionally, if the bandage was put on over swollen tissues and this swelling has decreased, then

continued overleaf 



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loosening and slippage can occur.

- Bandage tightening - this can be due to the dressing becoming wet/soiled. Swelling of the tissues underneath occurs causing the bandage to tighten. This results in circulation problems with the tissues underneath. In the worst cases, this can result in gangrene of those tissues.
- Pressure sores over bony prominences (elbow and hock being most common) - this can be an issue if a dressing is required over an extended period of time. These begin as irritated skin but can develop into deep penetrating ulcers if left untreated.

What to Watch for:

- Staining of the dressing.
- Unpleasant or foul odours from the dressing.
- Your pet suddenly becomes distressed (e.g. licking and chewing at the bandage)
- Slippage.
- Significant damage to the bandage by your pet.

If you note any of these changes then you should have the dressing assessed by your veterinary surgeon promptly. Where pain or a foul smell occurs, urgent attention from your vet should be sought. If toes that extend beyond the dressing swell up, immediately remove or loosen the bandage and contact the surgery straight away. Stop your pet from chewing the dressing. Socks can help, but if necessary use a buster collar for the persistent chewers.

Always err on the side of caution and contact the surgery for advice if you are in any doubt.



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