



**Description:** External skeletal fixators are used to stabilize fractures using percutaneous fixation pins that penetrate the bone cortices on one end of the pin while the other end is connected to an exterior stabilizing bar. The device provides stable fixation of bone fragments without implants in the fracture site, with no or minimal damage to soft tissue vascularity, and without immobilizing adjacent joints.

**Indications:** External skeletal fixators are a versatile surgical repair method used for long bone fractures, joint arthrodesis, correctional osteotomies, and temporary joint immobilization. They are particularly useful for open or highly comminuted fractures with vascular compromise or skin loss that require prolonged fixation, such as gunshot wounds or severe trauma.

#### **Postoperative Care**

**Medication:** Give any prescribed medication as directed. Do not give human pain medication to pets without first consulting with a veterinarian.

**Pin Care:** A small amount of discharge from around the pins is normal. If the discharge significantly increases or looks like pus, the apparatus should be checked. Light discharge should be cleaned daily with a cotton ball and warm water or hydrogen peroxide. Be careful allowing your pet around fences or wire kennels, as the pins can occasionally get caught on the fences. If the pins are visibly loose, the apparatus needs to be rechecked.

**Recommended Follow-Up:** Your pet will need to be rechecked at least weekly to evaluate the external skeletal fixator device. Follow-up radiographs need to be scheduled approximately one month after placement of the device. Please contact us immediately if: (1) problems are seen with the pins, (2) lameness increases, (3) swelling of the leg or foot is noted, or (4) chewing of the leg or foot is noted.

**Prognosis:** The prognosis depends upon the severity and location of the fracture and the degree of associated soft tissue trauma. The stabilization with this type of repair is good, and most fractures heal in a fashion similar to internal fixation. Potential complications may include pin loosening, infection, damage to the device from self-trauma or other objects (catching fixator on fences, etc), and drainage around the fixation pins.

Your pet's recovery and well-being are our primary concerns, so please do not hesitate to call and speak with a surgical technician or surgeon if there are any questions regarding your pet's recovery.