



Description: Fractures are often repaired with bone plates, intramedullary pins, interlocking nails, screws, and wires, also known as internal fixation.

Indications: Internal fixation is commonly used to repair fractures of the long bones and pelvis. Whereas there may be several treatment options for many simple fractures, certain fractures, such as radius/ulna fractures in toy breed dogs and most humeral, femoral, and pelvic fractures, demand internal fixation for a satisfactory outcome. Internal fixation is also strongly indicated in almost any fracture that involves a joint.

Postoperative Care

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

Bandage: If there is a bandage on the limb, it should be checked frequently for problems. The bandage should be checked and/or changed as soon as possible if any of the following are noticed: (1) swelling of the toes occurs, (2) the bandage becomes wet or soiled, (3) the bandage has slipped, or (4) your pet is chewing at the bandage. The bandage is not intended to support vigorous weight-bearing activity. It is intended to control postoperative swelling, protect the incision, and provide some additional support rather than substitute for proper exercise restriction.

Exercise: Fractured bones require at least 6-8 weeks to heal. For severe fractures or in older patients, healing can take longer. Until the bones have healed as determined by radiographs, the metal implants are all that are holding the bones together. Running, jumping, or playing with other pets should not be allowed and could lead to breaking, bending, or loosening of the implants and failure of the bone to heal. Your pet may feel like the bone is healed long before the bone has obtained full strength. Your pet should be confined to a quiet, enclosed area and walked only on a leash for short periods to urinate or defecate outside. Confinement must be continued until follow-up radiographs confirm adequate bone healing.

Recommended Follow-Up: Patients with trauma severe enough to break bones can often have internal injuries as well; sometimes these injuries are not apparent until days or weeks after the incident. Have your pet checked by a veterinarian as soon as possible if any signs of illness such as vomiting, trouble breathing, prolonged inappetence, change in urination, or pale gums are noted. Please contact us immediately if any of the following are noted:

- Swelling or discharge from the incision is noted
- An increase in lameness occurs
- Change in position or angle of the limb is noted
- Bandage problems occur

Please schedule an appointment for suture removal 7 to 10 days after surgery, and follow-up radiographs need to be scheduled approximately one month after surgery.

Prognosis: The prognosis for fracture repair with internal fixation is generally good, but depends on the severity and location of the fracture. Potential complications may include wound infection, osteomyelitis, delayed union, nonunion, arthritis, implant loosening, or breakdown of the surgical repair from excessive early activity of the patient.

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.