



Description: Oral fracture repair is surgical treatment of a fractured mandible (lower jaw) or maxilla (upper jaw) using internal fixation (bone plates, screws, pins, and/or wires) or external skeletal fixation (acrylic splint, interdental wiring, or external fixator).

Indications: Surgical repair is recommended for most jaw fractures where there is significant malalignment or malocclusion. Some types of fractures, however, may be able to be treated with a muzzle instead of surgical repair.

Postoperative Care

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

Diet: Soft food should be fed for at least 4 weeks following surgery. Water should be available at all times. Chew toys (rawhides, bones, and toys) and hard treats (milk bones, etc.) should not be allowed until the fracture is healed, as determined by radiographs. Bone healing normally takes at least 6-8 weeks and can often take longer with oral fractures. If your pet can't or won't eat within 3-4 days after surgery, then a feeding tube should be considered.

Exercise: Limit exercise to short leash walks for 2-3 weeks following surgery. Do not allow your pet to rough-house or play with other pets during the period of restricted activity.

Oral Hygiene: Depending on the type of fracture repair used, implants may be exposed to the oral cavity. It is important to keep food and debris from accumulating around the implants to prevent or minimize oral infection. A soft pediatric toothbrush works well to cleanse the area. Flushing the area with warm water and a syringe also may work if you cannot use a toothbrush.

Signs of potential problems: Observe your pet for problems, and contact us if you notice any of the following:

- Prolonged listlessness or anorexia
- Foul odor from mouth
- Persistent sensitivity around the mouth
- Swelling or drainage in the jaw area

Recommended Follow-up: Please schedule a recheck appointment in approximately 10 days after surgery or as advised at the time of discharge. Please contact us immediately if any of the above problems are noted. Another examination is recommended approximately one month postoperatively to assess healing of the fracture site.

Prognosis: The prognosis for healing of oral fractures is variable depending on the severity of the original injury. In general, most oral fractures heal quickly due to an excellent blood supply, and most patients return to normal oral function. Potential complications following oral fractures may include malocclusion of the teeth, dental trauma, loss of teeth, osteomyelitis, and nonunion.

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.