



ANIMAL SURGICAL CLINIC
of SEATTLE

PREPARING FOR YOUR DOG'S POST-OPERATIVE CONFINEMENT AT HOME

Almost all of our patients will require some period of confinement and exercise restriction upon returning home from surgery, to allow time for the patient's incision line and internal structures to heal. In many cases, this period will last only two weeks, but for others, particularly orthopedic cases, confinement may be required for ten weeks or more. Your surgeon will prepare a specific recovery plan for your dog at the time of surgery.

Using the ideas below or others that work best for your home situation will ensure the best healing environment, facilitating a return to normal activity as quickly as possible.

When your dog is discharged from the hospital after surgery, a technician will go over all of your discharge instructions with you, including specific confinement restrictions, take-home medications and any other information about your dog's at-home care.

LARGE DOG CRATE

- A wire crate is ideal for confinement. It provides just enough space for your dog to move around, while allowing visual stimulation by surroundings. A plastic dog crate may also be used, but may feel more isolating to your dog. Plan to use a crate size that will accommodate the plastic head cone (Elizabethan collar) that your dog will likely require.
- Set up the crate near an active spot in your home, or a large window or sliding door. Crates can be moved outside on nice days to provide additional stimulation. Place the crate out of direct sunlight.

SMALL ROOM (BATHROOM, LAUNDRY ROOM OR VERY SMALL BEDROOM)

- The smaller the dog, the smaller the confinement space should be. For a large dog, a very small bedroom may be fine. For a medium dog, a bathroom or laundry room is more appropriate. For a small or toy breed, confinement to a crate is recommended. Also, a high-energy dog will need to be confined to a smaller area than a sedentary dog.
- If using a bedroom, pull mattresses down onto the floor. Remove other furniture that your dog may try to jump onto, or make a visual barrier to jumping by placing large empty boxes or upside-down laundry baskets on the furniture.

FENCED-OFF AREA

- An X-pen is an excellent option for small dogs or for larger dogs that will not attempt to jump or climb out. For other dogs, it may be appropriate for use when you are able to supervise. Small dogs can also be confined by using an upside-down playpen.
- A table with four legs may be set up as a pen for dogs who are not escape artists. Tightly wrap netting, flexible fencing or chicken wire around all four legs, making sure the material starts at the floor and goes all the way to the table top edge, and that it has no sharp surfaces. Openings in the material must be small enough to prevent the dog from putting its head through. Use clips or other closure methods where the two ends meet in order to form a door that can be opened and closed.

SLIPPERY FLOORS? – Consider placing some non-skid rugs in high traffic areas to prevent falls.

We hope these tips will help you in your planning. Please feel free to ask us if you have any questions!