



Femoral Fracture

Diagnostic Plan

History
Physical examination
Palpation of the femur
X-rays

Therapeutic Plan

Surgery

Nutritional Plan

Nutrition adequate for tissue repair.

Femoral Fracture

Your pet has a femoral fracture. Fractures of the femur (the upper bone of the rear leg) are the most frequently seen fractures in veterinary medicine. They are usually caused by trauma. Femoral fractures are repaired through surgery. This client education sheet will help you learn more about femoral fractures and will review your veterinarian's instructions for your pet's care at home, as well as follow-up with the veterinary health care team.

What You Should Know About Femoral Fracture

A fracture is a break or rupture (crack) in a bone. Fractures vary in severity from those where only a small crack in the bone is seen, to those where the femur has fractured into several pieces, and one or more bone fragments have pierced the skin, increasing the chances of bone contamination and infection.

Causes

By far, the most common cause of femoral fractures is severe trauma. Foods containing too much phosphorus and too little calcium and those containing too much vitamin A may cause spontaneous fractures in animals.

Diagnosis

Many fractures of the femur can be diagnosed by palpating (examine by touching) your pet's rear legs. X-rays confirm the diagnosis and help diagnose minor cracks in the femur that can't be palpated. Blood tests and cultures for bacteria are necessary in some animals with fractures in which pieces of bone have penetrated the skin.

Treatment and Home Care

Slight cracks in the bone may be treated with enforced rest, and extra support can be added with casts or splints. Fractures that result from an improper pet food respond to repair and proper nutrition. All other fractures require reduction (realignment of fracture ends) and surgical repair. Depending on the type of fracture and the fracture site on the femur,

your veterinarian may repair the fracture using internal bone plates, bone pins, surgical wire, bone screws and external devices that fit on the outside of your pet's leg.

General anesthesia is necessary to repair most femoral fractures. And it is often necessary to give another anesthetic when the surgical device (e.g. a bone pin) is removed after the fracture heals.

Fracture healing is monitored by taking X-rays. X-rays show whether the ends of the bone have grown back together. Most veterinarians take X-rays four to eight weeks after fracture repair depending on the animal's age and fracture type.

When your pet goes home, you should give all prescribed medication (such as antibiotics) and monitor your pet's appetite and water consumption. If changes occur in appetite, water consumption or mental status – such as the onset of depression – you should call your veterinarian. You may need to return to the hospital for suture removal and bandage changes. Be sure to follow your veterinarian's instructions on controlling activity.

If your pet's leg is bandaged, make sure the bandage stays dry and clean. Also, make sure your pet's foot below the bandage doesn't swell. Compare the leg below the bandage with your pet's non-bandaged leg – both should be similar in size.

Nutritional Plan

If your pet has a femoral fracture, your veterinarian may give you special feeding instructions. Surgical patients may benefit from foods with increased levels of protein and energy during the recovery process. Such foods include Hill's® Science Diet® brand pet foods.

If your pet's femoral fracture was caused by serious imbalances in dietary vitamins and minerals, your veterinarian may recommend a life-stage pet food based on your dog's or cat's activity level and age. Nutrition is especially important for proper growth and tissue repair. Optimal nutrition should also reduce the health risks associated with feeding excess protein, phosphorus, calcium and calories. Foods formulated for optimal nutrition that avoid excess levels of harmful nutrients include the Hill's® Science Diet® brand pet foods.

Transitioning Food

Unless recommended otherwise by your veterinarian, gradually introduce any new food over a seven-day period. Mix the new food with your pet's former food, gradually increasing its proportion until only the new food is fed.

If your pet is one of the few that doesn't readily accept a new food, try warming the canned food to body temperature, hand feeding for the first few days, or mixing the dry food with warm water (wait ten minutes before serving). Feed only the recommended food. Be patient but firm with your pet. This is important because the success or failure of treatment depends to a large degree on strict adherence to the new food.

Presented as an educational service by



Home Care Instructions

Client's Name: _____

Patient's Name: _____

Medication(s): _____

Nutritional Recommendation: _____

Follow-Up Appointment: _____

(Hospital Stamp Area Above)

REGULAR VISITS WILL HELP OUR VETERINARY HEALTH CARE TEAM PROVIDE FOR YOUR PET'S BEST INTEREST.