

What to expect after your dog's TPLO

Weeks 1-4 post TPLO:

Check the incision daily for redness, excessive swelling or drainage. Some bruising and swelling at the incision site and the lower part of the leg are expected for the first 7 days. A cool pack (a zip-lock bag filled with 3 parts water to 1 part rubbing alcohol that has been in the freezer for 30 plus minutes) wrapped in a towel may be applied to the incision site twice daily following physical therapy for 5-10 minutes for the first 5 days post operatively. The skin sutures should be removed 10 to 14 days after surgery.

Leash walk only when going outside to use the bathroom. When inside, your dog must remain strictly confined when not being strictly supervised. This means in a crate or in a small room with a non-skid floor and NO furniture to jump on or off! It is extremely important not to let your dog lick at the incision site. A LICK SLEEVE or an Elizabethan collar should be worn when your dog is not being strictly supervised. Give pain medications, antibiotics and sedatives as directed by your veterinarian. Within 14 days of the surgery your dog should be weight bearing on the limb though still "favoring" it.

PASSIVE RANGE OF MOTION should begin 2-3 days after surgery. We have a video on our website to help you with the PT. **Go to www.tarheelvets.com, click on LEARNING CENTER and scroll down until you get to the SURGICAL RECOVERY VIDEOS.** You will need to just do the KNEE EXERCISES. When starting physical therapy, remember to go slowly and stop the session if your pet seems exceptionally uncomfortable (trying to bite, kicking off you with the unaffected limb or vocalizing)-if this behavior continues contact us. Repeat these exercises 5-15 minutes twice daily for the next 4 weeks.

A 4-week recheck appointment with your veterinarian (or TVSS) is recommended to evaluate your dog's progress.

Weeks 4-8 post TPLO:

As long as your veterinarian is satisfied with your dog's recovery at this point, leash walks may begin. Start with slow walks and a short leash on level ground for 5 to 10 minutes 2 to 3 times a day. Move slow enough to ensure the limb is used in every step. Gradually increasing the amount of time you walk and the number of walks you go on a day. You should work up to about 20-30 minutes 2-3 times per day.

Week 8 and beyond:

A final recheck appointment with radiographs is recommended to ensure that the bone is healing as expected and to determine your dog's joint and limb function. As long as all has progressed as expected, your pet can do all the leash walking you would like to do and gradually build back up to normal activity outside over the next 4 weeks. Stairs can now be used without assistance.

Occasionally your dog may be lame after increased activity. As long as this does not persist and resolves with a few hours of rest you may continue on your schedule. If, however, your pet seems very uncomfortable and resists the activity it is fine to skip a session or even a full day as long as the next day you're seeing improvement. If there are any concerns, please feel free to contact TVSS.