



## Bandage, Splint or Sling Home Care Instructions: A Client Handout

Pets are members of the family and it is our pleasure and honor to treat your family member. This handout is intended to educate pet parents about bandage or splint care after your pet has been discharged from the hospital.

Your pet is recovering from a condition that requires a bandage, sling or splint. Proper home care is imperative to your pet's recovery. Complications are more likely to occur in pets that do not receive proper home care and monitoring. Splints, slings and bandages can potentially cause very serious problems if they become damaged, slip, twist, remain on too long, or become wet. Splints, slings and bandages must be kept dry and clean at all times. If they become wet/damp or soiled, a redressing by your veterinarian is necessary as soon as possible. **Wet or damaged bandages, slings or splints are dangerous to your pet.**

It is generally recommended that pets remain indoors or in a kennel as much as possible while a bandage, sling or splint is in place. However when your pet must go outdoors to briefly relieve themselves, a waterproof covering should be applied to the bandage, sling or splint to keep it dry. The covering must be used for short periods only (no more than 60 minutes) and removed immediately upon coming inside. If the covering remains on longer than 60 minutes, moisture may build up inside the covering resulting in a damp bandage, sling or splint. A wet bandage, sling or splint can quickly cause a skin infection. Never allow wet bandages to remain in place for more than 24 hours, your pet's doctor will need to change the wet bandage as soon as possible.

Check your pet's toes or the skin/tissue at the bottom of the bandage or splint at least twice daily. If you see or feel any swelling or coolness, the bandage, sling or splint may have become too tight or has slipped. This needs to be checked immediately by your pet's doctor. For bandages, or splints on the limbs, the toes may spread apart indicating there is swelling. Use a normal leg or foot for comparison; compare the size of the toes or tissue and also compare the temperature of the body parts. Swelling, dampness or coolness indicate there is a problem. If the bandage or splint appears to have slipped, twisted, become damaged or smells badly, your pet needs to be checked by your veterinarian immediately.

Activity restriction is an important part of the healing process. Significantly restrict your pet's activity unless otherwise instructed. This includes keeping your pet leashed while outside for bathroom breaks. Controlling their activity level will help prevent damage to the splint, bandage or sling and will improve the healing. Pets with any splint, sling or bandage that involves the legs, feet, back, hips, neck, or shoulders need to avoid slippery floors and/or surfaces.

Bandages, slings and splints need to be monitored and/or changed by your pet's doctor on a regular basis, sometimes as often as every 24 hours. It is imperative to work closely with your veterinarian during this period and call them immediately with any concerns.

Please contact the Lake Shore Pet Hospital medical team with any questions.