



MyPet Animal Services

Care of Cast or Dressings

VERY IMPORTANT

Keep the dressing clean and dry.

Use a protective cover – dog boot, thick plastic bag, used drip bag (ask vets) - over the dressing when your pet goes outside, especially if it is wet.

Remove this cover when your pet returns inside to prevent sweating.

Restrict your pet's activity and encourage them to rest. Short on-lead walks only for dogs, keep cats and small animals indoors.

Purpose of a Bandage

Your pet may require a bandage, cast, or dressing for a wound to provide support and protection for the following reasons.

- Prevent self-trauma of a wound whilst healing
- Protect a wound from the elements and environment
- Support for a fracture
- Reduce contamination and promote wound healing
- Provide comfort and pain relief for sprains, strains and dislocations, even if there is no wound present. Bandages need to be firm, secure, comfortable, and applied properly to allow the skin and tissues within to breathe.

Common Bandage Problems

Problems can occur surprisingly easily due to the lifestyles of our pets.

- **Bandages becoming wet or soiled.** This reduces ventilation through the bandage and prevents the tissues from being able to breathe. If left on for an extended period, the tissues can become macerated or infected, exacerbating even minor problems.
- **Bandages slipping.** Slipped bandages will not offer the required support. Most likely caused by over activity or pets chewing/licking the bandage. If the tissues were swollen when bandaged and the swelling decreases, loosening or slippage can also occur.
- **Bandages tightening.** Can be the result of dressings becoming wet or soiled. Tissues under bandages swelling can also cause tightening. Bandages that are too tight can cause circulation problems and, if left, gangrene of the tissues underneath.
- **Pressure sores on mobile or bony prominences** (most commonly the elbow, hock, or toes). Are particularly problematic if the dressing is required for an extended period of time. Normally begin as irritated skin but can develop into necrosis and deep penetrating ulcers if left untreated.

Watch out for: Staining on the dressing, unpleasant odours from the dressing, distress in your pet, pain when handling the bandage or area, licking or chewing, gross slippage, significant damage to the bandage.

If you notice any of these problems or changes, promptly have the dressing assessed by a veterinary professional. If limbs that extend beyond the dressing show signs of swelling, immediately loosen or remove the bandage and contact your surgery immediately.

Stop and prevent your pet from chewing or messing with any dressings. Socks, collars/cones, or pet shirts can help if needed.