

Post - op care: Fight wounds

General

Animal fight wounds can sometimes become worse before they become better – tissue may continue to die off for several days after initial treatment. In some cases, the visible injuries are far less severe than injuries to deeper tissues or internal organs, leading to the medical nickname of ‘tip of the iceberg’ injuries. Total healing for severe cases can take 4-8 weeks or longer, and additional surgical procedures are sometimes needed.

Monitoring

Please watch the wound(s) for any swelling, redness, gapping sutures, greenish discharge or pain. Some of the skin around the wounds may die off in the next few days - this is due to the crushing from the original bite wounds. It is possible that additional anesthesia to address the wound(s) will be needed if they are not healing properly.

Monitor any bandages for wetness, odor, slippage or soiling. Wet and soiled bandages should be removed immediately, and the pet brought back to the clinic for a new one. Bandages should not be changed at home, as improper application can cause serious damage.

If your pet has been sent home with a Buster collar (either of hard plastic or soft material), make sure it stays on your animal at all times when not monitored, in order to prevent self-trauma. The collar can be removed at times to allow for easier eating and drinking - but only under close observation.

Please call the hospital if you note any loss of appetite for 48 hours, or no stool seen in over 48 hours. Loss of appetite for 1-2 days can be normal. Additional signs that warrant a call to the hospital include vomiting, pain, extreme lethargy or trouble breathing.

Activity

While the wound(s) are healing, please try to keep your pet as quiet and calm as possible. Confine to a small area where they will not be tempted to jump, and give them close access to food and water. Keep dogs on a leash at all times outside, and keep walks short - for toileting only.