

# ANIMAL CLINIC

*Your Pet • Our Team • One Family*

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## Ear Crop Post-Surgical Instructions

Owner: \_\_\_\_\_

Pet's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Dr. Teresa Gernon

Surgery Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Discharge Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Now that your puppy's ears have been cropped, there is still quite a bit of work to be done to reach the desired goal. The following has been prepared to help you understand what needs to be done over the next weeks/months.

**POST-SURGICAL DISCOMFORT:** Your puppy should be in little to no pain after his/her surgery. There may be some scratching at the bandage or head shaking, mostly from the incision itching as it heals. If at any time your puppy suddenly seems uncomfortable in any way, please call us. Even if your puppy doesn't seem painful, please finish the prescribed pain medication. Never give a double dose or any over-the-counter medications unless you are directed by us.

**SUTURES:** There are usually two sets of sutures (stitches) that are removed at two separate recheck visits\*. The first set of sutures from the mid-ear to tip are removed **7 days after surgery**. The second set of sutures at the base of the ears will need to be removed **10 days post-op**. None of the sutures will dissolve on their own! **Warning:** delaying the removal of sutures beyond this time frame (exception is if the bottom suture removal falls on a Sunday, at which time they will be removed on Monday) will lead to suture reactivity and may cause excessive bumps at the suture holes and the potential for excess scarring. Do not remove sutures at home. Leaving even a tiny amount of suture material behind can lead to major issues.

\*the exception to the two-set suture rule is miniature breeds and pit bull or other short crops.

**INCISION CARE:** apply **Neosporin Plus Ointment** to incision line \_\_\_\_\_ time(s) daily. This helps keep the scabs from drying too much and decreases the amount of itching and discomfort. There is no need to scrub or clean the incision other than gently rubbing off any excessive scabs that are loose. Avoid applying so much ointment that the tape gets overly-coated with ointment. The oily nature of the ointment can cause the glue of the tape to become gooey and not stick. Discourage excessive scratching/rubbing at incision area and/or bandages. An Elizabethan collar can be used, but is usually not needed. See further information (under medication schedule) if ears are bandaged on top of head (usually applies to Dobermans, Boxers, and Great Danes).

**POSTING EARS:** Also called taping or bracing, this is the **MOST** crucial part of all, and will need to be done properly in order for your puppy's ears to stand correctly. The process of posting serves to hold the cut ears upright while the ear cartilage matures. We are, after all, taking an ear that would naturally be floppy and cutting it and "training" it to stand upright. Every veterinarian or breeder has his/her preferred method for posting ears. Regardless of method, the goal is to get the ears to stand upright in the proper position, to be as comfortable as possible for the pup, and to be easy to monitor for moisture and odor.

The **NUMBER ONE** question asked is "How long will it take to get my puppy's ears to stand?" This is impossible to answer without making generalizations. The length of crop and compliance with reposting ears plays the biggest factor. Short crops such as pit bulls and miniature breeds may need minimal to no posting. Longer crops, especially "show length" crops will take many months to stand. Genetics and ear thickness can play a factor also. Posting will begin at the time of the second suture removal when the incisions are healed. **Posts will usually need to be changed once weekly, or as needed to keep the ears completely upright at all times. Never take the ears down without getting them posted again within a couple of hours.** Leaving ears down for more than a couple hours can cause huge set-backs in the posting process.

One common problem that may be seen is that one of the posts pops out of the base of the ear. If this happens, immediately get the post back into the ear and return for a repost as soon as possible. If it happens over the weekend, try reinforcing the post/bridge area with additional 1-inch medical tape.

**Keep ears dry at all times!** Do not attempt to bathe the pup with the posts in the ears unless the posts are to be changed the same day within a matter of hours. Avoid walking your puppy in heavy rain, though it is OK if they get sprinkled on lightly. Avoid letting him/her play in mud and dirt, as it usually works it's way down into the ear base and causes irritation.

### BRING YOUR PUPPY INTO THE HOSPITAL IF:

- At any time the puppy gets the ears saturated with water
- There is any foul smell or discharge coming from the ears
- There is any sudden or abnormal discomfort or itching

**\*\*\* Please call ahead or make an appointment if ears need to be rechecked.** You may also drop your puppy off for several hours or for the day at no extra charge. Four reposts are included with the price of the crop. This covers enough time for you to learn how to post the ears if desired. If you prefer for us to repost them for you after this, a repost fee will be charged at each visit to cover the time and materials needed to repost.

Please don't get discouraged if ears don't stand within the "expected" amount of time. Many puppy's ears take months to stand completely, even under ideal circumstances. *Please remember there is never a guarantee that you puppy's ears will stand.* However, we do everything possible to insure that they will. We want your puppy's ears to stand as much and as quickly as you do!

Remember not to let the ear training process interfere with any aspect of your puppy's normal training and health care. Continue create-training/housebreaking as usual. Also, don't forget regular vaccinations, heartworm prevention, flea control, etc. during this period of time. Sometimes we get so caught up in the ear training process, that we almost forget the more important things.

**PLEASE SEE THE BACK FOR DETAILED MEDICATION AND INCISION CARE INSTRUCTIONS...**

**MEDICATION SCHEDULE / POST-SURGICAL INSTRUCTIONS:** Allow your puppy to rest quietly tonight. He/she may be slightly groggy/ glassy-eyed from the injectable pain control. Feed and give water in SMALL amounts until tomorrow. Expect frequent urination tonight and in the morning from the I.V. fluid administration. Remove the tape band-aid from leg (I.V. catheter site) later tonight.

1. **Rimadyl (carprofen) pain control medication:** Give \_\_\_\_\_ tablet(s) by mouth \_\_\_\_\_ times daily until gone.

Administer next dosage: \_\_\_\_\_

2. **Antibiotics:** \_\_\_\_\_

Administer next dosage: \_\_\_\_\_

3. **Neosporin Plus Ointment.** Place a small amount along incision line \_\_\_\_\_ times(s) daily, starting tomorrow.

If your puppy was sent home with a Styrofoam cup attached to head, basic daily care includes the following:

1. Untie bow/knot from under chin. Pull off outer stretchy tan stocking material to expose the next bandage layer.
2. Un-wrap white stretch gauze layer.
3. Remove old Telfa non-stick bandage material.
4. Clean off excessive scabs or discharge from incision IF NEEDED.
5. Apply Neosporin Plus ointment along entire incision line, avoiding excessive application on the tape.
6. Apply new Telfa non-stick bandage layer. The shiny no-stick side always goes TOWARD the incision.
7. Re-wrap or apply a new white stretch gauze layer. Stretch layer can be taped down with 1-inch medical tape if desired.
8. Replace outer tan stocking hat and tie with a know or bow-tie under chin. If your puppy's stocking cap is getting too stretched-out or dirty, an adult tube sock can be used instead. Make a cut with scissors on the foot-entry side and use the toe-end as the top of the hat.

The cup will stay on head until the SECOND set of sutures are removed, then the ears will be posted individually. Please monitor the skin around the base of the cup, as sometimes a puppy will get a rash or irritation at the edge of where the cup meets the base of ear/head. If this occurs, apply a medicated powder such as Gold-Bond and call or bring puppy to clinic ASAP.

**FOLLOW-UP VISITS:** (please schedule with the front desk before leaving, or call back to schedule)

First suture removal visit (1 week after cropping) : \_\_\_\_\_

Second suture removal visit (10 days after cropping): \_\_\_\_\_

**IF AT ANY TIME YOU HAVE QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS, PLEASE CALL THE CLINIC.**