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## **SPLINT/CAST/BANDAGE CARE**

Bandages and splints or casts can be very useful to help treat our injured pets; however, if a bandage is not properly cared for complications, sometimes serious complications, can arise. These basic guidelines should help minimize or avoid these complications.

### **Splint/Cast/Bandage Care for Limbs**

- Keep the bandage clean and dry. Use a waterproof baggy over the end of the bandage when walking your pet outside. Remove the baggy when inside.
- Most splint or cast bandages allow you to see the middle two toe pads at the very end of the bandage. It is important to check these pads daily to ensure they are of normal temperature and color and they are not swelling. If they are swelling, the toes will look like they are spreading apart. If you have any concerns regarding swelling, contact your veterinarian.
- Monitor the bandage for any loosening or slipping—this can lead to a poor fit and the development of pressure sores. If you have any concerns about the position or appearance of the bandage, contact your veterinarian.
- Monitor the bandage for the presence of drainage or for any foul odor. Drainage or odor can signal infection or poor healing of wounds present at the time of bandage application or the development of new wounds under the bandage. Contact your veterinarian with any concerns.
- Do not let your pet lick or chew at the bandage. Sometimes they do this out of boredom; however, sometimes it is a sign that they are uncomfortable or there is a problem with the bandage. Contact your veterinarian if this occurs.

### **Bandage care for the Trunk, Head, or Neck**

- Monitor the bandage for slipping or displacement. Chances are, if it has slipped it is no longer performing the function it was placed for, and it may cause additional problems for your pet.
- Make sure the bandage is not too tight. If a bandage around the neck or chest is too tight, it can impede normal breathing. If an abdominal bandage is too tight, it may cause discomfort or impede normal urination (especially in male dogs). You should ideally be able to place a finger or two under the bandage. Remember, a bandage that was not too tight at the time of placement can become too tight with movement, slippage or swelling.

If you have any concerns about the bandage/splint or cast your pet is wearing, contact your veterinarian!