



Bandage Care

Your companion animal's bandage, splint, or cast needs special care in order for it to serve its function of stabilizing the limb and preventing complications.

It is very important that strict rest be enforced. The material of the bandage, splint, or cast are durable but not designed to withstand the wear and tear of constant exercise. Your companion animal should be restricted to a cage or small room, effectively isolated from other animals and small children. Running, jumping and playing are prohibited and exercise outside must be limited to leash walks only, even if with a fenced yard. These walks should only be long enough to allow urination and defecation. If you are having trouble restricting your companion animal's exercise, please let your veterinarian know.

The bandage, splint or cast must be kept clean and dry. If it becomes soiled or wet, it may need to be replaced immediately since a skin infection under the bandage, splint or cast can result. When you take your companion animal outside, cover the bandage, splint, or cast with a heavy plastic bag and secure it with tape. Remove this cover upon returning inside since leaving it in place can also cause problems. Elevating the food and water bowls may help keep the bandage, splint or cast clean and dry, especially for dogs that tend to drool, overturn or step in their food. Licking or chewing the bandage, splint or cast can also cause wetness. If licking or chewing occurs, please contact the staff at Miami Valley Animal Hospital so an Elizabethan Collar can be fitted to prevent licking and subsequent damage to the bandage, splint or cast.

Monitoring for swelling or infection is important. Watch for toes protruding from the bandage, splint or cast. Examine them daily to make sure they are close together and the area between them should feel warm and dry. If the toes appear to be spreading apart from one another or they feel cold or wet, your veterinarian will need to decide whether to change the bandage, splint or cast. Sometimes an infection will develop under the bandage, splint or cast. Signs of an infection include discoloration of the bandage or a bad odor. Another sign can be recent licking or chewing at the bandage in an animal previously tolerating it. Any sign of discomfort, excessive tightness or uncontrolled infection demands immediate evaluation by your veterinarian.

Reevaluation and replacing the bandage as needed is important. The frequency of reevaluation by your veterinarian depends on numerous factors. These appointments are important and in some cases, even delaying that appointment a day or two can cause significant problems.