

the small animal surgeon

for small animal surgical referrals and consultancy

*Dr Ruth Youmans
BVSc (Dist), DVCS (Dist), MVetClinStud, FACVSc
Registered Specialist Small Animal Surgery*

Cage Resting Your Pet

Often when our pets become injured they need treatment or surgery as well as cage rest to help them recover. Cage rest is the dog and cat equivalent of bed rest for people and means that for their recovery period (**usually around 6-8 weeks**) they are confined to a cage or crate when unsupervised.

Cage resting an animal has many benefits and is often just as important as the surgery itself to help their injuries heal. The cage or crate is to prevent your pet from being too active after surgery.

Any running and/or jumping activities too soon after a surgical procedure will cause problems with wound and bone healing.

A variety of metal implants (plates, screws, wire) can be used in orthopaedic procedures. These can break or loosen if put under too much strain and overuse, in turn potentially causing the bone to become displaced or fracture. This can require more surgery and will add to the recovery time and cage rest.

It is also very important to keep your pet cage/crate rested after soft tissue procedures as there can be a lot of sutures which again if put under too much strain from overuse can cause wound breakdown and swelling.

Sometimes your pet will be discharged home with an Elizabethan collar (e-collar) and/or bandage.

Please ensure the collar is used as advised when unsupervised and that the bandages are checked daily for any wetness, slipping or rubbing.

The cage then needs to be large enough to accommodate your pet's size plus the potential addition of an e-collar. They need to have soft bedding, be able to get up and change position comfortably and have space for food bowls, water bowls and litter trays for cats. The cage should have a secure roof so that the animal cannot injure itself by trying to jump out and be sturdy enough so that they cannot force their way through the sides or door.

A small amount of controlled weight bearing is encouraged and is expected that it should improve daily.

If your pet likes lots of attention the cage can be kept in a family area in the house so that they don't feel left out and have plenty to look at. However care should be taken that they do not become too excited and too active if family members are about. If your pet is shy or easily frightened the cage may need to be kept in a quiet spare room so they can relax and rest.

Because your pet should be in the cage at all times, frequent toilet breaks (at least two or three times a day) will be needed to make sure they are comfortable. Please ask for advice if your dog will have to navigate stairs to get to his toileting area.

They may also need to be medicated two or three times daily, often along with food, so care should be taken to **split their daily portion** evenly between these times.

Monitoring their toileting habits and food intake during this time is important as the change in routine can sometimes lead to accidents and reduced activity can lead to weight gain. If possible, weigh your pet regularly while in rest so you can adjust the amount of food accordingly.

Often animals adjust quite quickly to the routine of being confined but sometimes boredom can become an issue. There are a variety of 'boredom busters' you can try if your pet needs enrichment during their time spent alone.

- Treat Balls and Kong Toys are great for stuffing food in and freezing it.
- New toys
- Rawhide or chew bones
- Hidden cats treats
- Leave soft music going or TV on low.

Spending time each day giving your pet a groom could also be a good way to help them relax and improve circulation.

General sizes (approximate) appropriate for your pet are as follows:

Small Dog (or cat) - 23" high x 30" deep x 28" wide

Medium Dog - 35" high x 35" deep x 56" wide

Large Dog - 57" high x 35" deep x 66" wide

Places to try for getting a cage sorted for the arrival of your pet coming home after his surgical procedure are listed below. You may also be able to speak to your GP vet regarding hire or purchase of collapsible crates through their practice.

Trademe

Kritta Krates

Ph: 09 292 8789

Email: info@krittakrates.co.nz

Address: 196 Clevedon-Kawakawa Road, Clevedon Village, Auckland

Arthurs

Ph: 09 579 7496

Email: rdevans@xtra.co.nz

Address: 9 Botha Road, Penrose, Auckland

Trade Tested

Ph: 0800 800 880

Email: www.tradetested.co.nz > Pet Gear > Dog Crates

Address: 5 Percival Gull Place, Auckland Airport

Merihart Kennels

Ph: 09 238 1570

Email: merihart@xtra.co.nz

Address: Murray and Rowena Jenkenso, 620b Waiuku Road, RD3, Pukekohe

Kathryn Ralph DVN.