

BANDAGE CARE

Your pet has a bandage as part of their treatment. Bandages are applied to protect, treat or support an injured area of the body. As the pet owner, you can help manage the bandage. How well a bandage is cared for affects the outcome of the healing process.

Important facts about bandages

Very few bandages last as long as they are needed.

Your pet's bandage will likely need changing several times during their treatment. How often depends on the location of the bandage, the type of bandage and the treatment it is offering, how well the bandage is cared for, unexpected developments or changes in the treatment plan.

Bandaging materials are expensive and bandaging is a skilled and time-consuming job.

Sedation or anaesthesia may be required to keep your pet pain free and still for successful bandaging. Charges do apply.

It is important to bring your pet to all scheduled revisits and bandage change appointments.

Failure to do so may result in complications that are painful; more difficult, time consuming and expensive to treat; loss of the limb or death.

Do not attempt to bandage your pet yourself unless instructed by the veterinarian.

In the case of bandage failure, only bandage your pet to stem bleeding, or apply a loose bandage to cover an exposed wound. In all cases it is important to bring your pet into the clinic as soon as possible for assessment and re-bandaging by a veterinarian or veterinary nurse.

Problem signs

- Your pet uses the bandaged limb *less* than before.
- The bandage gets wet or develops a wet spot.
- You smell a bad odour.
- Your pet has a decrease in appetite or activity level.
- Your pet's toes are cold, discoloured, or spreading apart/swelling.
- Any swelling above or below the bandage.
- The bandage slips or rotates.
- Your pet is distressed or attacking the bandage.

If you notice any of these signs or have any concerns, call us immediately on (06) 368 2891.

Important rules of bandage care

Animals with bandages should not be outside unattended.

Your pet will need to be kept inside, either in the house or another suitable enclosed area. Dogs should be on a lead when taken outside to toilet.

The bandage must be kept dry.

If your pet has a bandage on the leg or foot, when your pet goes outside to toilet, cover the bandage in a plastic bag. Take the bag off again once your pet is back inside, or the bandage may become sweaty and moist. Bathing and swimming are not allowed until the bandage comes off.

Animals with bandages must not be allowed to exercise freely.

Our patients are not able to tell when they are overdoing it, nor can they tell us when they start to develop bandage sores. Usually, being inside the house is enough, but if your pet is especially rambunctious, it will be necessary to confine him or her to a cage. Do not let your pet outdoors without a lead.

Check your pet's toes at least once a day.

If the bandage is around a limb, the only way to see if the bandage is too tight is that your pet's toes will slowly spread apart. Mark the location of your pet's toenails on the bandage so you can see if they are separating over time. Also, check the temperature and colour of the toes every day. They should not be blue or cool to the touch.

If your pet's toes are covered by the bandage, more frequent bandage changes will be required.

You must check the bandage at least once a day.

Bandages can loosen over time as the padding compacts and the limb shrinks from lack of use. Also, many of our bandaged patients are young and growing, and it is not uncommon for a bandaged patient to outgrow the bandage before it is time to take it off. For these and other reasons, bandages can rub and cause sores.

If not attended to right away, these sores can become severe.

