



Bandage Care

The Function of a Bandage

Your pet may go home with a bandage or a dressing to provide support or protection for the following:

- Prevent self trauma of a wound while healing
 - Protect a wound from the environment
 - Support a fracture
 - Reduce contamination of a wound
 - Give comfort and pain relief of sprains and sometimes dislocations even if no wound is present
- The bandage needs to be secure, comfortable, firm and applied properly to allow the tissues underneath to 'breathe'.

Bandage Problems

These can occur surprisingly easily due to the nature of the lifestyles of our pets. The main issues we see are:

- The bandage becomes wet or soiled. This reduces ventilation through the bandage which, if left for an extended period, can cause the tissue beneath to become macerated or infected
- The bandage slipping, which reduces necessary support. The most likely cause of this is over activity of the pet or the dressing has been chewed/licked at! In some cases, this can be caused if the dressing has been applied to swollen tissue which has then reduced.
- Bandage tightening. This can be due to the dressing becoming wet/soiled. Swelling of the tissue underneath occurs causing the bandage to tighten, resulting in circulation problems. In severe cases, and if the bandage isn't checked or changed as regularly as recommended, this can result in the gangrene of the tissue!
- Pressure sores over bony prominences (elbow and hock being most common) are a potential problem, especially if a dressing is required over an extended period. These begin as irritated skins but can develop into deep penetrating ulcers if left untreated.

What to Watch For

- Staining of the dressing
- Unpleasant odours from the dressing
- Your pet suddenly becomes distressed (e.g licking and chewing at the bandage) and it appears painful to handle
- The dressing looks loose or like it has slipped
- Significant damage to the bandage

If you observe any of these changes, particularly where pain or foul odours occur, then you should promptly have the dressing assessed by your veterinary surgeon.

If toes that extend beyond the dressing swell up then immediately remove or loosen the bandage and contact the surgery.