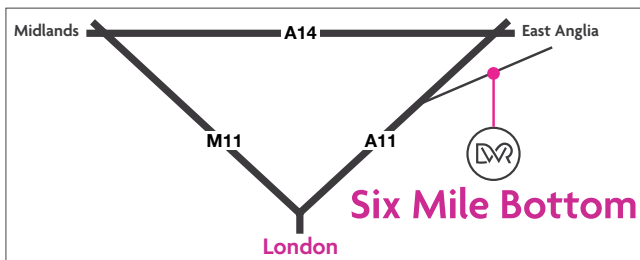


Bandages are essential to promote wound healing and provide support, but they can cause serious problems. They should be checked regularly, according to discharge instructions, and veterinary advice should be sought if there is evidence of any of the concerns described in this leaflet.



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## Bandage Care



**Dick White Referrals**  
Excellence. Trust. Care.

## Bandages

Bandages are widely used in dogs and cats to cover open wounds, to reduce post operative limb swelling or to provide support for injured limbs.

Bandages are not benign! We know that roughly 1 in 3 limb bandages will result in skin sores due to rubbing with prolonged use, even when managed well. Bandages can cause significant injury if they move, become too tight in places or become wet. Hence it is very important that bandages remain in place, are always kept clean, dry and intact and are checked regularly.

Bandages are normally well tolerated by our patients and most will be expected to bear weight and walk on a leg with a bandage in place.

Here are a few simple instructions to follow, and signs to look out for, to ensure that your pet's bandage does not give rise to any problems:

### Bandage Changes

- Please keep to the scheduled bandage changes for your pet as outlined on your discharge instructions sheet.
- We prefer to perform bandage care for our patients at Dick White Referrals. If this is not possible, please make arrangements with your own veterinary surgeon who will take over the on-going care and responsibility for the bandages. In this case, please ensure we are updated with any problems or concerns, even if your local vet is happy to manage them.

### Daily Care

- Please ensure that you examine your pet's bandage carefully at least twice daily.
- Please do not allow the bandage to become wet. There are different options for protecting your pet's bandage:
  - **Recycled drip bags** - waterproof and hard wearing
  - **Boot** - non-waterproof and so must be used lined with two plastic bags if wet outside

**Do not leave the protective plastic bag or boot in place permanently** because the foot will become moist from sweat, causing a problem.

- The tips of your pet's toes may have been left out of the bandage to enable them to be checked. In this case, please examine them twice daily to look for signs of swelling and to check their temperature. They should not feel overly warm or cold, they should not look swollen or be exposed beyond the end of the bandage, and they should not be painful to the touch, but your pet should feel a light pinch.

**If you see any of the following, please contact us as soon as possible:**

- If the bandage gets **wet**
- If the bandage **slips** down the leg
- If the bandage becomes **damaged** in some other way
- If the **toes** appear **swollen**
- If the toes appear **excessively warm or cold**
- If there is any unusual **smell** from the bandage
- If you see any **discharge/fluid** seeping through the bandage
- If your pet has been bearing weight or walking comfortably on the bandaged leg, but then becomes **more lame**
- If your pet pays particular attention to, or attempts to **chew**, at the bandage
- If the bandage wraps around your pet's body, then monitor for **swelling** of the head and neck and for **restricted ability to breathe**

**If in doubt, it is much better to check, change or remove the bandage than to leave it in place unchecked.**

**If you are at all concerned about the care of your pet or their bandage, please contact us immediately.**

There are staff on hand to assist you 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. They will be able to guide you as to what action, if any, needs to be taken and how promptly.

Should your pet's bandage slip off or require removal at home, please bring the bandage with you for assessment as it may be helpful for us to assess wound discharge on the bandage and, if using splints, we often use these again for future bandages.

### What to expect at your pet's bandage change appointment

We will advise you whether or not your pet is likely to require sedation for bandage changes, based on the nature of their injuries, their compliance and any procedures which are required at the time of bandage change. If in doubt, it is better to withhold food from your pet for 6-8 hours prior to the bandage change appointment.

When sedation is not required we will, where possible, aim to change the bandage while you wait. For patients requiring sedation, you will be asked to leave your pet with us for a few hours to enable the anaesthetists to prepare and administer sedation in a safe and controlled fashion, and to then allow your pet to recover from the sedation before travelling home with you.



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