



BANDAGING AND SPLINTS FACT SHEET



Bandaging wounds and injuries for protection and/or support is quite common. However, attention must be paid to the following matters.



ATTENTION MUST BE PAID TO:

- How bandages are applied;
- Care and maintenance of the bandage and injury it is supporting; and
- Changes to the wound that can occur under a bandage, after injury or surgery occurs.

Failure to apply a bandage properly and to care for it appropriately afterwards can result in serious complications for your greyhound. You need to be aware of and minimise the risk of these complications.

The common reasons for bandage application in practice include:

- First-aid for an injured limb to support, and restrict movement, bleeding and swelling;
- Providing compression to control tissue swelling and bleeding;
- Protecting wounds from self-

trauma and contamination.

- Protecting and supporting surgical sites; and
- Providing padding prior to splint or cast application thereby protecting underlying structures from pressure sores forming.

Bandages should be well fitted and applied so that underlying structures are well padded and protected. They should be changed in a timely manner depending upon the reason the bandage has been applied and whether or not the bandage is kept clean and dry.

The bandage should be removed and replaced at the first sign of animal discomfort. Wet, soiled, worn, or loose bandages should be changed immediately.

The bandage or splint/cast should suit the injury. Wounds should be covered with an appropriate primary dressing before bandaging. The bandaging should adequately support and protect the area.

Bony points must be adequately protected and padded. Spaces

between the toes should be padded (e.g. with cotton wool) to prevent pressure sores from adjacent toes.

A PADDED BANDAGE

is the most common bandage type. It is suitable for first-aid support, injury compression, and wound management. It is also used for some fracture support when re-enforced with splinting materials, although it is not primarily the bandage that supports a fracture.

Padded bandages are commonly used post-operatively to protect surgical wounds. The application of the bandage is relatively straight-forward, but obtaining suitable tension, compression and support requires attention to detail.

WHEN APPLYING A PADDED BANDAGE

Start with cotton wool padding, ensuring it is placed to protect the bony points of the toe joints and the toenails from rubbing adjacent toes. You need to make sure there is a suitable amount of padding and coverage for the type of wound or injury.

- The use of some synthetic cast padding material can cause skin irritation in some greyhound patients and should be avoided. Dressing rolls (7.5-10 cm wide) are usually applied from the lower end of the bandage rolling up the limb then returning down the area again, overlapping approximately the width of the material with each wrap.
- Conforming or dressing gauze is then wrapped over the top of the padding material. You should apply suitable tension to provide support and some compression without being constrictive. If you are too tight you may reduce blood flow to the area below the bandage. The limb being bandaged should be held in position while it is being bandaged - no limb should be bandaged in extension then flexed; this may cause unwanted constriction at the point of flexion.
- Elastic adhesive or other suitable cohesive bandage is applied over the top of the gauze bandage to finalise the bandage's application, incorporating the stirrups into this layer of the band. If not using stirrups, the cohesive bandage can be placed, and an elastic adhesive 'collar' placed around the top end of the bandage attaching it to the skin.

Stirrups are tape that is applied directly onto the limb of the greyhound at one end and attached onto the bandaging material at the other. It aims to prevent bandaging material from slipping off.



A ROBERT JONES (RJ) BANDAGE

This is a heavily padded supportive bandage, frequently used to temporarily support and immobilise fractures and joints below the elbow or stifle (knee). It provides compression to minimise pain and swelling and can be re-enforced with splinting materials incorporated into the outer layers of the bandage.

It is simply several padded support bandages placed sequentially around the injured limb to create a stiff bandage which, through its bulk and compressive characteristics, restricts movement of joints and fracture sites, and prevents injury induced tissue swelling.

WHEN APPLYING AN RJ BANDAGE

- Clean and cover any exposed wounds with appropriate dressings.
- Apply tape stirrups to the distal extremity.
- Wrap the required area with cotton wool roll, combine roll or limb padding material.

When dressing rolls are applied, commence at the toes and progress up the limb proximally (towards the torso) and then return distally (away from the torso), overlapping approximately half the width of the material with each wrap and applying a uniform tension to each wrap as they are laid around the limb.

- Elastic conforming gauze is applied to compress the padding beneath it, commencing at the toes and progressing proximally. The stirrups can be incorporated into the gauze layer at this point.
- The above two steps are then repeated once or twice, each time applying greater tension in the conforming gauze layers until the bandage stiff.

- The outermost layer of elastic adhesive or cohesive bandage is applied similarly, but with suitable tension so that when the bandage is tapped you should hear a hollow sound.
- When deemed appropriate, splinting material is incorporated into the outer layer of the bandage.



SPLINTS

There are supports that are applied over bandaging to provide additional support to immobilise fractures, joints or soft tissue structures; either in a first-aid capacity prior to definitive treatment, post-operatively as an additional support, or as the main form of treatment for an injury.

Such supports can be specifically designed products, heat or hot water mouldable products, or improvised devices such as wire, pieces of wood, piping or a flat metal bar incorporated into a bandage to achieve the desired immobilisation of the injured area.

