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"Fluffie" - Young Cat in Traffic Accident



Fluffie

The day before I was due to go on holiday, just as I was packing my bags, I received a phone call from the practice asking me to return to the surgical unit to examine a patient. My colleagues were in a quandary!

A young feline patient, Fluffie, had been involved in a road traffic accident and had severely damaged her right hindleg. The hock joint had been badly traumatised. The tibia or shin bone was broken and the particular fragment of bone necessary for reconstruction had been left by the roadside, ground into the tarmac. The skin and ligaments surrounding the ankle joint were also affected leaving a gaping wound heavily contaminated with debris.

To amputate or not to amputate was the question? The first decision to make is usually whether the owners are prepared to pay for an expensive procedure which might not be successful. Sad to say, but not every one of my patients results in a happy ending despite all our efforts.

In this instance the owners were contacted and a guarded prognosis was offered. Despite this and the possibility of a "lack of return" for their investment they agreed to proceed with treatment.

Firstly, a long time is spent cleaning the wound of contaminants by careful flushing and debriding. As stated in previous weeks "trying to create an environment in which healing can occur". I returned home to pack during this painstaking process!

Once completed (wound debridement not my packing) I then returned to the surgical unit to apply the external fixator. This provides stability to the damaged area and facilitates further wound cleaning in the weeks ahead.

Six weeks later and "as if by magic" Fluffie is running around on all 4 legs with all the wounds completely healed! Whilst clearly wanting to take all the glory for my patient's success myself the fact remains that without conscientious nursing, the recuperative powers of a young cat and perhaps most importantly the support and co-operation from Fluffie's owners my contribution would have amounted to very little!

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This article is available on the Fairfield Veterinary Centre web site at www.fairfield-vets.co.uk

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