

Post Surgery Cones and Body Suits

Making the best choice for you recovering pet

At Bethany Animal Hospital we want to make sure that your fur baby is as comfortable and safe as possible after any procedure. One of the biggest owners (and pet) in compliances we face post-operatively is having our fur friends wear, and remain in, their cones for the recommended duration of time (averaging about 2 weeks).

Now we understand that cones are not the most fun thing to deal with, so we have put together a list of alternatives. With this list we have noted some pros and cons of each.

We hope this helps!



Here at Bethany Animal Hospital, we use and give out what are known as Elizabethan collars (pictured to the left). Named after the cone like shape that Queen Elizabeth I (pictured to the far left) was often depicted wearing.

These cones are made of a hard plastic that wraps around the patient's neck, with the depth extending past the patient's nose.

Pros: The inflexibility and length of the cone is a great deterrent for pets with injuries closer to their rear end or paws, making it near impossible for them to lick or chew at the surgical site.

Cons: The hard shell and inflexible shape can often be a hindrance. Creating loud noises when bumping into surroundings or completing everyday tasks, such as eating and drinking.



Though Elizabethan collars are one of the top choices of cones for our recovering pets, the hard plastic cone may not be for everyone.

Thankfully they do make a soft Elizabethan cone that has worked out for many of our patients (pictured to the right). They can be purchased off Amazon, or from most local or online pet supply stores.

Pros:

- The soft cone does not make much noise when bumping into objects, which can be less scary/intimidating to some pets.
- Cats, in our experience, have a harder time pushing off these cones, since there are not met with any resistance, like the hard plastic cones.
- Pets seem overall more comfortable in these cones
- Often, cone can fold in half to allow the patient to eat, without taking it on and off.
- Most are machine washable

Cons: Due to its flexible nature, the patient may be able to bend the cone in such a way that they may get at their surgery sites. We ask that you just keep an eye on the pet and make sure the cone is large enough.



Now if Elizabethan collars are not working, here are a few other options....



Blow-up Cone Collars

This cone type (pictured to the left) covers a small radius, which makes it easier for a patient to adjust to, since it does not restrict much movement or general functions. It works well for small chest or shoulder injuries, since often the pet can still not reach those areas.

This cone seems to work best for your brachycephalic breeds: Pugs, Bulldogs, Shih Tzu, etc. since their muzzles are short and can not reach over the edge of the cone.

They are not recommended for face, paw, or rear end procedures (spays, neuters, orthopedics, etc.) since patients can often still reach these areas with this cone on. This is especially true for your more long nosed/muzzled breeds: Shepherds, Hounds, Dobermans, etc. since their muzzle often passes the edge of the cone, leaving the surgery site unprotected.

They have recently come out with cone collars that have “Elizabethan” side attachments (pictured to the right). Currently, our facility has not heard much feedback regarding these, but they do look to offer a little more protection and depth than the standard blow-up cone collar.

- Have been recommended for use after orthopedic surgeries.



Body Suits

Another alternative to cones could be a body suit or even a tied t-shirt (depending on surgery sight location). This solution offers a gentle protection to multiple surgery sight areas, depending on the coverage of the suit purchased.

Pros:

- Often one of the least restricting forms of protections and usually is not met with much resistance.
- Tip – maxi pads over the incision sight may help with wound seepage and changing it regularly can help keep the sight clean.

Cons:

- Needs to be changed at least once daily to keep surgical site clean.
- Can cause additional irritation to surgical sight depending on fit of the body suit and surgical location due to friction.
- Some body suits limit a pet’s ability to urinate and defecate freely. Please double check that you are buying the suit that works best for you and your pet.
- Pet(s) can still scratch and lick over the surgical site (or chew through cloth), which can still cause irritation or infection.

