

Veterinary Science · Exercise restriction after cruciate ligament surgery

SPK-VET-01 | Original simulated candidate card

Setting: Veterinary clinic

You are a veterinarian. Mr Ramesh Achari's 5-year-old male Labrador retriever had tibial plateau levelling osteotomy (TPLO) surgery on his right hind leg yesterday for a ruptured cranial cruciate ligament, and the surgery went well. The dog is ready to go home today with pain relief and a protective cone; the surgeon's plan is short lead walks for toileting only at first, increased only as directed by the clinic, a wound check in 10-14 days, and strict exercise restriction until an X-ray review at about 8 weeks. Mr Achari has mentioned to the nurse that he plans to let the dog off the lead at the beach next week because 'he is already walking fine'.

Interlocutor: OWNER

Your tasks

1. Find out about Mr Achari's plans for the dog over the coming weeks and his home situation
2. Explain why the dog needs strict exercise restriction even though he is walking well (bone healing, risk to the plate and screws)
3. Explain what activity is safe during recovery (lead walks for toileting only at first, confinement, no running, jumping or stairs)
4. Respond to Mr Achari's frustration about the length of the restriction
5. Agree a home care plan and arrange follow-up visits (wound check in 10-14 days, X-ray review at about 8 weeks)

Veterinary Science · Puppy vaccination and early socialisation

SPK-VET-02 | Original simulated candidate card

Setting: Veterinary clinic

You are a veterinarian. Ms Efua Visser, aged 27, has brought her 9-week-old Border Collie puppy in for a first health check. The breeder's records show one vaccination has already been given, and the second puppy vaccination is due today. The examination today is normal. Ms Visser has told the nurse that she has read online that vaccines are 'over-used'. She plans to skip the second vaccination and take the puppy to the local dog park this weekend.

Interlocutor: OWNER

Your tasks

1. Find out about Ms Visser's concerns about vaccination and her plans for the puppy (where she has read about vaccines, what she wants to do this weekend)
2. Explain why a puppy needs a full course of vaccinations (protection not yet complete, serious infections such as parvovirus)
3. Explain the risks of taking a partly vaccinated puppy to a dog park before the course is finished
4. Reassure her about her worries and suggest safe ways to socialise the puppy now (visitors at home, carrying the puppy outside, puppy classes)
5. Agree a plan for vaccination and socialisation

Veterinary Science · Starting insulin for a newly diagnosed diabetic cat

SPK-VET-03 | Original simulated candidate card

Setting: Veterinary clinic

You are a veterinarian. Mr Farai Rinaldi, aged 68, has brought back his 11-year-old neutered male domestic shorthair cat, who is overweight. Blood and urine tests have confirmed diabetes mellitus, and the cat is otherwise bright and eating well. You have recommended twice-daily insulin injections, but Mr Rinaldi has told the receptionist he 'could never stick a needle in' his cat.

Interlocutor: OWNER

Your tasks

1. Find out Mr Rinaldi's concerns about giving injections and his home situation (daily routine, any help available)
2. Explain in simple terms what diabetes means for his cat and why twice-daily insulin is needed
3. Reassure him about giving injections (fine needles, injection under the skin, practical support from the clinic)
4. Explain the warning signs of low blood sugar and what to do
5. Agree a plan for starting treatment and follow-up

Veterinary Science · Rabbit with gastrointestinal stasis needing admission

SPK-VET-04 | Original simulated candidate card

Setting: Veterinary clinic

You are a veterinarian. Ms Carmen Ortega has brought in her children's 6-year-old neutered male rabbit, which has not eaten or passed droppings for about 18 hours. On examination the rabbit is quiet and hunched. Its abdomen feels firm and gassy, gut sounds are reduced, and you can see sharp spurs on the back (molar) teeth. You suspect gastrointestinal stasis, probably linked to dental disease, but a blockage has not yet been ruled out, and you want to admit the rabbit today. The nurse at the front desk has a written estimate ready for the first 24 hours of hospital care (pain relief, fluids, X-rays, warmth and monitoring); dental treatment is not included. Ms Ortega has told the receptionist she must leave in a few minutes to collect her children from school.

Interlocutor: OWNER

Your tasks

1. Find out briefly about the rabbit's recent eating, droppings, diet and behaviour
2. Explain your findings and why gut stasis in rabbits is an emergency (risk of rapid deterioration)
3. Explain the treatment you recommend in hospital (pain relief and fluids first, prompt X-rays to check for a blockage, assisted feeding only once a blockage is ruled out and he is stable; dental treatment discussed separately later)
4. Persuade Ms Ortega to leave the rabbit at the clinic today, responding to her concerns about time
5. Agree practical arrangements (consent and cost limit for initial care, contact details, when you will phone her with an update)

Veterinary Science · Quality-of-life discussion for an elderly dog

SPK-VET-05 | Original simulated candidate card

Setting: Veterinary clinic

You are a veterinarian. Mrs Tamsin Bhattarai, aged 72, has brought in her 14-year-old female Golden Retriever, who has advanced osteoarthritis and chronic kidney disease and is on pain relief chosen to suit her kidney condition, a kidney-support diet and an appetite stimulant. Over the past fortnight the dog has stopped being able to stand without help and is eating very little; today she has lost weight, has muscle wasting in her back legs and early pressure sores on her hips, and you want to reassess her pain, nausea and kidney function today before agreeing a plan. Mrs Bhattarai has asked for 'stronger tablets'.

Interlocutor: OWNER

Your tasks

1. Find out how the dog has been managing at home (eating, any other symptoms, moving, toileting, the things she still enjoys)
2. Explain why increasing her tablets alone will not reverse her underlying diseases (kidney risks of some medicines, the need to reassess her pain and other symptoms)
3. Raise the subject of her quality of life sensitively, including euthanasia as an option if her comfort cannot be maintained, and respond to Mrs Bhattarai's distress
4. Agree a safe plan for the next day or two (e.g. treatment today, practical care at home, an early review, when to call the clinic urgently)