



Clermont  
Animal Hospital, Inc.



## Ear Crop Information

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*Clermont Animal Hospital provides custom ear cropping. This means that we do NOT use a form or stencil, which will result in a one-size-fits all crop. It also means that puppy owners can have direct input into how the crop will look. We can adjust the height, width, and shape of the bell to create a customized look for your dog. The surgery, however, is only one part of the equation. While the surgeon shapes the ears, how they stand and whether or not there is unsightly scarring is mostly a matter of the aftercare provided at home. This handout is designed to guide puppy owners through our process. Note that every veterinarian has different techniques and recommendations. Those provided here reflect the process at Clermont Animal Hospital.*

### Before the Ear Crop

#### Ear Crop Consultation

Before the scheduled ear crop, we will meet with you during regularly scheduled appointment to discuss the process and your desires regarding the type of crop you would like for your dog. We can also show you how tall a standard (show) crop will be on your puppy if you are unsure of what length crop you want. At this visit, we make sure that your puppy is healthy and answer all of your questions. To get the most of this visit, please come prepared by bringing the following:

- Vaccination history (we require that puppies are up-to-date on distemper, parvo, and bordatella)
- Fecal exam/deworming history (all puppies must be checked for parasites and dewormed)
- Blood test results, if available (a complete blood count and chemistry panel are required pre-op)
- Photos showing the type of crop you would like for your dog (look online for photos)
- Any questions you may have

Note that vaccinations, fecal exam, dewormer, and blood work must all be done within 30 days before the scheduled surgery date. Any of these services can be provided by Clermont Animal Hospital for your convenience at the time of your consultation appointment. Ear crop consultations may be scheduled the morning of surgery for any out-of-town clients; however, documentation of the above must be received prior to scheduling this appointment.

#### Pre-Surgical Preparation

- The morning of surgery, your puppy must be fasted (no food). Make sure that all food has been taken out of your puppies reach before bedtime the evening before. Water is fine until arriving at our hospital.
- Clients may opt to drop their puppy off between 8:30 and 9:00 if they have no interest in seeing the drawn lines of the intended crop. It will be necessary to fill out admissions paperwork and confirm the desired crop style before leaving.
- If you wish to come into the surgery suite and view the drawn ear crop just prior to surgery, giving your input and preferences on the shape of the ears, please make an appointment at 10:30 the morning of the procedure and plan to stay for about two hours.
- An EKG is performed before anesthetic to ensure that your puppy has a healthy heart.
- Your puppy will receive a pre-anesthetic exam.
- All ear crop patients receive an IV catheter and a bolus of fluids prior to anesthetic.
- After anesthetic induction, the ears are clipped, cleaned, and prepared for surgery.
- Once the patient has been prepared and moved to surgery, the lines of the intended crop will be drawn with a sterile surgical marker. These are hand-drawn and the right ear is always slightly different than the left. At owner request, two different styles or lengths can be drawn for comparison.

- At this point, owners who are participating in the decision process are invited to come into the surgical suite and choose which ear shape they prefer. If necessary, the shape can be adjusted at this point to accommodate owner preferences. Owners who have taken advantage of the early drop-off option can have a photo texted; however, we cannot delay surgery waiting for a reply text or make adjustments requested via text. If you want to give input into the shape of the ears, you MUST make arrangements to stay for the pre-surgical preparation.

## After Surgery Care

### First 3 Weeks Post-Operative Care

- Your puppy will go home with bandaged ears and an E-collar between 4:30 and 5:30 the afternoon of the ear crop surgery.
  - The bandage needs to stay on for a minimum of 24 hours. If it comes off sooner, you can replace it or we will replace it free-of-charge during the first 24 hour period.
  - If the bandage is still on at 72 hours, cut the tape across the head and beneath the chin. Give the bandage a little time to loosen up, then gently peel the tape off—generally the piece over each ear slides off as a unit.
  - If using a scissors to cut the bandage, cut only what you can see—be VERY careful NOT to cut the skin!!!
- The E-collar MUST be kept on AT ALL TIMES for the first two weeks.
  - If the collar is off for cleaning or repair, a responsible adult must be within arms reach of the puppy to stop him/her from scratching at the ears.
  - Clermont Animal Hospital will NOT be responsible for any complications that result from a failure to follow this rule.
  - Inflatable innertube-style collars are NOT an acceptable substitute as the puppy can still scratch his ears while wearing them.
- Post-Operative Medications
  - **Amoxicillin**—give twice a day at prescribed dose to prevent infection
  - **Carprofen** (Rimadyl/Vetprofen)—give twice a day at prescribed dose for pain and inflammation (generally only needed for the first week unless there are complications).
  - **Betadine** (povidone iodine)—apply to the edge of the ear twice a day, gently cleaning off excessive crusting while taking care not to disrupt any well-adhered scabs. This should continue as long as the edges look raw.
- Post-operative Rechecks
  - Regularly scheduled rechecks are at 1, 2, and 3 weeks post-op; however, any time you are concerned that there are complications (bleeding, oozing, missing stitches, infection, etc.), we are happy to see your puppy for a recheck. For the first two weeks, there is NO CHARGE for these checks as long as they occur within business hours and as long as you have been keeping the E-collar on your puppy at all times.
  - At the **one week recheck** we clean the ears (if needed) and check for any signs of infection, ear creasing, or other complications. We generally put on a bandage similar to the one we placed post-op to help your pup get used to wearing the ears bandaged and to the taping process. This bandage usually only stays on for 12-36 hours before falling off, though it should be removed at 72 hours if it is still in tact (see note above on bandage removal).
  - At the **two week recheck** we remove the sutures and post the ears for the first time. Anyone who will be involved in the posting process at home should attend this appointment, if at all possible. Feel free to videotape the posting process or record the process by some other means. At this point, the E-collar is no longer medically required; however, many dogs will need to continue wearing it whenever they are wearing their posts in order to prevent them from scratching off the bandages with the hind feet. Some

dogs may only need the collar for an hour or two after the posting, to allow them to adjust to the bandages.

- Once the posting process has started, generally we follow a schedule of 3 days on 1 day off, repeat (see exceptions below); however, if the post comes off after being on for at least 24 hours, leave it off for 24 hours before reapplying.
- The purpose of the **three week recheck** is to make sure you are comfortable doing the ear postings and are not having any problems or complications. By this visit, you should have posted (or at least attempted to post) your puppy's ears 1-2 times. This is your chance to ask any questions. We are happy to post the ears for you, but the posting and a new set of posts (if you fail to bring yours back) are not included in the package and will be charged separately. This is the last of the included recheck visits. Any additional visits will be charged at the standard recheck price.

### Ear Posting Process

*You will be provided with a pair of posts (one for each ear) at the two week recheck. These posts are custom-made to properly fit your dog's ears. The posts are made from wooden cotton swab sticks wrapped in foam packing, taped and covered with Coflex self-adhering bandage material. These posts are reusable—simply remove and replace the outer layer of Coflex before each posting in order to prevent bacterial and yeast build-up that can lead to ear infections. We prefer Johnson & Johnson Zonas porous medical tape. You will need one inch and two inch. You can find this on Amazon (link below) or at your local pharmacy. Coflex or Vet Wrap is available on Amazon, but mostly in multipacks.*

1" tape (12 pack): [www.amazon.com/Johnson-JJ5104-Zonas-Porous-Adhesive/dp/B01ET9DAP0/ref=sr\\_1\\_5?keywords=johnson%2Band%2BJohnson%2Bmedical%2Btape&qid=1557268173&s=pets-supplies&sr=1-5-catcorr&th=1](http://www.amazon.com/Johnson-JJ5104-Zonas-Porous-Adhesive/dp/B01ET9DAP0/ref=sr_1_5?keywords=johnson%2Band%2BJohnson%2Bmedical%2Btape&qid=1557268173&s=pets-supplies&sr=1-5-catcorr&th=1)

2" tape (single roll): [www.amazon.com/Zonas-Adhesive-Tape-yards-Single/dp/B0002YFRNY/ref=pd\\_cp\\_328\\_4?pd\\_rd\\_w=gkWAD&pf\\_rd\\_p=ef4dc990-a9ca-4945-ae0b-f8d549198ed6&pf\\_rd\\_r=TR7VBNG0XM7AQPBY279&pd\\_rd\\_r=2679c983-7118-11e9-acff-01df0530b2b5&pd\\_rd\\_wg=ddKI3&pd\\_rd\\_i=B0002YFRNY&psc=1&refRID=TR7VBNG0XM7AQPBY279](http://www.amazon.com/Zonas-Adhesive-Tape-yards-Single/dp/B0002YFRNY/ref=pd_cp_328_4?pd_rd_w=gkWAD&pf_rd_p=ef4dc990-a9ca-4945-ae0b-f8d549198ed6&pf_rd_r=TR7VBNG0XM7AQPBY279&pd_rd_r=2679c983-7118-11e9-acff-01df0530b2b5&pd_rd_wg=ddKI3&pd_rd_i=B0002YFRNY&psc=1&refRID=TR7VBNG0XM7AQPBY279)

1. **Gather materials**—Posts with fresh Coflex covers, 1" tape, 2" tape, and E-collar.
2. **Restrain your puppy**—Use one arm to hold his/her body close and the other hand to hold the muzzle. Initially, the hand of the arm restraining the body will also hold the post in place. It is best to do this on a table or other elevated surface.
3. **Fit the post**—stretch the bell of the ear around the bottom of the post and stretch the ear pinna up along the post so that a tiny amount of the very tip is above the post.
4. **Tape the tip of the ear to the top of the post**—use about 2" of 1" tape to tape the tip of the ear to the top of the post so that it curves slightly outward.
5. **Tape the ear to the post**—beginning at the bottom front, place the tape in a "breast cancer ribbon pattern," going diagonally up and around the front of the ear, across the pinna, and diagonally down and around the back of the ear (crossing in an "x" at the bottom). Repeat this pattern taking care to keep the pinna edges neutral or slightly curved in toward the post. Tape securely but do NOT pull tight. Overlap each piece of tape at least 50% over the previous piece. Continue taping until you have reached the top of the ear and completely covered the post.
6. **Support the base of the ear**—Use 2-4 strips of tape to support the base of the ear, taping from back to front while gently lifting the ear straight up ½-1."
7. **Switch sides**—the person taping needs to hold the dog (particularly the head) while the holder switches sides. If you let go of the head, the puppy will shake it's head and all your hard work will go flying across the room!
8. **Repeat steps 1-6 for the second ear.**
9. **Make the tape bridge across the top of the head**—stand in front of the puppy with the head held straight and level. Alternate strips across the front and the back, pressing the sticky sides together. Continue upward, overlapping by 50% each time for 3-4 strips on each side (about ½-

2/3 of the way up the ear). If the ears are leaning too far out, use this tape bridge to gently pull them into the position you prefer and hold them in that position.

10. **Make the chin strap**—use a piece of 2” tape attaching it to one side of the ear, passing it under the chin, and adhere it to the opposite ear. Use several strips of tape on the diagonal to anchor it to the front and back of the ear on each side of the head.
11. **Finish up**—Tuck in any stray ends of tape (or trim them off), press all tape firm and flat, gently squeezing both ears. Make sure there are no loose pieces of tape or sticky edges exposed.
12. **Put on the Ecollar**—Unless you know that your dog will leave the posting alone, it is best to put the Ecollar on for at least a little while after each posting. This allows your dog to get used to wearing the bandage again. Some dogs need the Ecollar the entire time the ears are posted, every time they are posted. Most dogs get used to wearing the posts and will only try to scratch for the first 30-60 minutes after posting.

## FAQ

1. **How long will I have to post my puppy’s ears?** The answer is simple—when YOU like how they look and they are standing continuously (not flopping a day or two after removing the posts), you are finished with the posting process. How long this will take varies greatly. The breed, the size of your puppy, the crop style selected, genetics (such as the strength of the cartilage at the base of the ears), and your ability to do a good posting are all factors that determine how long the posting process will take. The general range is from three weeks to three months, but some take shorter or longer depending on the above factors. If you are not making progress with the posting process, we encourage you to call and discuss this, or schedule an appointment so that we can check the ears and make recommendations.
2. **Is the 3 days on, 1 day off always the recommended schedule?** No. This is the recommended schedule most of the time, but there are exceptions:
  - **Infection**—if your puppy has an ear infection or a skin infection on the ear pinna, a different schedule may be recommended (see below)
  - **Lack of progress**—if your puppy’s ears are not standing better with each posting or you are not seeing overall progress, a more aggressive posting schedule may be recommended. The days in the posts can be increased to up to 7 days on, 1 day off. Be forewarned that there is a higher chance of infection with increased time in the posts. Postings should NEVER exceed 7 days for any reason!
  - **Posts come off before 3 days**—If the posts have been on for at least 24 hours, we recommend that you leave them off for 24 hours, even if they have not been on the full three days. This is because the process of the tape peeling off the ear irritates the skin and can predispose your puppy to skin infections. By allowing the ears to “breathe” for 24 hours, we can minimize this risk and catch developing infections before reposting (see below for more information on infections).
  - **Scheduling conflicts**—while you will get the best results if you stick to the recommended schedule, there is room for adjustments to accommodate the busy American lifestyle. Once in a while, it will not hurt to leave the posts on for 4-5 days instead of three or to leave the posts off for 2 days instead of one. Just realize that longer postings have an increased risk of infection and longer time between postings will slow the progress. Postings should NEVER be left on for more than 7 days for any reason.
3. **What if my puppy develops an ear infection or a skin infection on the ear pinna during the healing/posting process?** If your puppy develops an infection during the posting process, it is important to seek veterinary care as soon as possible!!! Continuing to post during an untreated infection can lead to an increase in the severity of the infection and (in certain cases) result in

permanent damage to the ear, greatly impacting the cosmetic results of the ear crop. While ear infections can be treated by your local veterinarian, it is essential to inform them about your dog's posting schedule and ask for recommendations. It is, however, highly recommended that you seek our recommendations, as most veterinarians are inexperienced in dealing with ear crops and postings. While general recommendations are provided here for informational purposes, they are NOT a substitute for veterinary care!!!

- **Ear Infections (in the ear canal)**—This results in a discharge down inside the ear that may be dark brown or purulent. It is usually accompanied by a distinct odor and results in itchy, sore ears. Infections can be yeast, bacteria or both.
  - It is VERY important to request an otic cytology to determine the type of infection and quantitate the number of organisms. DO NOT just start treatment without this test! Because the posting process can interfere with the treatment or delay the response, it is essential to monitor the infection with serial ear cytologies.
  - If long-acting treatments such as Claro or Osinuria are used (recommended), ear postings can often continue on-schedule as long as no sign of worsening is seen; however, the posts should NOT be seated in the ear at the base—just tape them to the inside of the pinna.
  - Be sure to disinfect posts with a Clorox wipe between postings, and allow it to dry thoroughly. In some cases, if the packing material becomes contaminated, the post may need to be remade.
  - If short-acting ear medications are used on a twice a day schedule, it is often necessary to stop the posting process for 3-4 days until improvement is seen and then post 24 hours on 24 hours off, skipping just one treatment with each posting cycle. This is not the recommended treatment as it misses recommended doses of the ear medication, often leading to delayed resolution. It also interferes with the normal posting schedule.
- **Pinna Skin Infections**—These are most common along the ear edge at the surgery site before the healing process is completed; however, tape irritation and the increased moisture associated with the posting process can lead to skin infections anywhere in the taped areas at any time. Hair loss, raw/red skin, oozing, crusting, excessive scabbing, skin inflammation and/or odor are all possible with a skin infection.
  - These can be treated with antibiotics—topically, systemically, or both.
  - Postings should be discontinued until the infection is resolving. While your regular vet may handle the treatment of the skin, it is VERY important to consult us regarding when to restart posting. Posting the ears during an existing infection can cause permanent damage!
  - The posting schedule needs to be adjusted frequently as the infection heals or worsens. Regular follow-up will be required.

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