

New Collars Comfortably Keep Dog From Licking Wounded Paw

Dogs licking a wounded paw won't heal but a comfortable collar could help.

By Jon Geller, DVM

Q. My 70-pound, 13-year-old Chow Chow-Siberian Husky mix was hit by a car about three years ago. She had no broken bones or internal injuries. She has arthritis, but for the most part she's pretty comfortable. However, her front paw has an open wound that never heals, never gets infected, and until recently had stayed the same size for two years. The paw seems somewhat numb, and she licks at it constantly.

Her vet has looked at it and doesn't seem too concerned. But I am.

Is there a way to wrap it so that she will leave it alone and I can try to get it healed up?

A. The key to allowing the wound on your dog's front foot to heal is to keep her from licking it. The rigid, plastic Elizabethan collars that have been traditionally used are truly uncomfortable, impractical and painful to the shins of dog owners. Most dogs detest wearing them, and will sometimes go into a depressed funk while they have them on.

Fortunately, a new generation of protective collars has changed all of that. These newer collars are made of a bendable, soft, blue fabric that is virtually indestructible, but prevents dogs from getting at their feet. Most dogs seem to barely notice they are wearing them.

Ask your veterinarian for a prescription for a spray-on medication that contains an antibiotic and steroid to help reduce itching and to eliminate any underlying infection. If you use a collar and spray on the medication twice a day for 14 days, you can probably get this wound to heal up. She may need to wear the collar for an additional two weeks to allow complete healing.