**Post-op Care**

* **During post-op care the veterinarian should educate the handlers and farmers on what they need to do during the recovery period and why they need to do it.** This is of utmost importance as they will be the ones with full access to care for the animals. The veterinarian should communicate well and often enough with the farmer/handlers to help ensure compliance with post-op guidelines.
* **If frontal sinus is open** then cover or plug the hole with clean gauze (inner layer of gauze may be drenched in antibiotic and the outer layer of gauze without antibiotic). The gauze is to be changed daily until the wound heals. The gauze protects from entry of foreign material and will provide drainage as it will soak up any excess fluid that fills the sinus. Prevent foreign fluids or materials from entering the sinus; if foreign material, purulent matter or debris builds up in the sinus then the area should be lavaged with isotonic saline and debrided where applicable; the head of the animals may also be tilted back to aid in drainage.
* **Daily sprays of topical bactericidal** like furacin or antibiotic like oxytetracycline should be applied to area until healed.
* **Fly/Screw worm sprays should also be applied** immediately after procedure. The spray should go around the opening and not in it as it is for topical use only and the frontal sinus is a delicate sensitive area. The spray should be applied daily (at least in the first week after) until it is healed.
* **Observe calves closely for one hour following dehorning.**
* **Wound powder may be applied to the surface of the horn bud after dehorning**. Note: avoid powder use if the sinus cavity is exposed
* **The following factors should be monitored:** signs of pain, attitude, hydration, TPR, appetite and physical appearance. This should be done immediately after procedure and once or twice daily during recovery period. Also, look out for signs of post-op complications. In Group 1’s patient all vital signs returned to normal directly after procedure.
* **Animals recovering from anaesthesia** may feel a bit weak as the sedation may not completely wear off after the procedure and so it is important to ensure that the patients are slowly walked or carried to a safe, hazardless area. The best thing to do is to get an animal into a clean, shady, wide open space with minimal dust where there are no objects to trip over or bounce into.
* **After dehorning** each calf, all equipment should be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected in preparation for dehorning the next animal. Close observation of the calves for about 10 days and continued fly control is important.
* Where needed, care should include the administration of analgesics, antibiotics and supportive therapy.

**Recovery Period**

Recovery time is the time required for a patient to return to their usual condition or state following a procedure. The degree of aftercare required during this time varies widely, depending on the indication of the surgery.

**When Frontal Sinuses Are Exposed**

The following describes the expected healing process when the frontal sinus is exposed:

Initially, there is a marked thickening of the scab over the wound as a ridge near the skin margin.A pale yellow to pink membrane then develops from the sides of the frontal sinus opening. Granulation tissue forms to fill the frontal sinus opening before healing by epithelization, followed by wound contraction. In some animals a bony horn stump projecting about 2-3 mm above the wound surface may appear then undergo osteosis; gradually loosened and fall off during the healing process. Post scab healing phase will occur during the 6 to 13 weeks after surgery.

In some animals the healing process may take longer and depends on the presence of infection and bacteria.

**Callicrate Banding Method**

Expect the horns to fall off in 20 to 30 days for small to medium sized horns. Horns with large bases may take up to 50 days.

**Hot Iron Disbudding Method**

The horn should fall off within four to six weeks after using hot iron.

**Chemical Paste Method**

The calf should be kept away from its mother until the caustic material becomes dry and hard. If they are not kept separated, the calf may cause burns to the cow’s flank or udder due to contamination from the caustic material. The calf should be kept out of the rain for a day or two. Rain may cause the caustic material to run down the calf’s face or into its eyes. A scab should form over the horn buds within a few days after applying the caustic. This scab should drop off in one to two weeks, leaving a hairless area.