

Woodchuck with a Broken Ankle – 5-Day Healing

While trying to rescue a baby woodchuck from being run over by a car, I inadvertently broke its ankle. It was squealing in pain, and the foot just hung and flopped around. It being Friday night, and the vet was closed till Monday, so I made a soupy mixture of calcium bentonite clay somewhere between liquid and hydrated so it would coat the leg thickly without me having to rub the clay on and maybe damage it more, and then stuck the woodchuck's entire leg down into it. He stopped crying almost immediately, so you could tell the clay eased the pain. I then placed him in a small cage in a dim room so he could sleep. I noticed he licked some of the clay off his foot at that time, so he got some internally.

The next three days I dipped his leg and foot into the clay mixture once in the morning and again in the evening and kept him in the small cage with food near enough that he didn't have to walk to get it. I did not wrap the leg or set it in any way as I wasn't sure how to do it and didn't want to set it crookedly. Day five had him up and walking around and unhappy with his small quarters. He next day he was climbing the cage. Both feet and legs are as good as new, and he's almost ready to be released back into the wild. Note: He likes the clay so much that I have to put a small amount of the hydrated on some of his food or he tries eating dirt outside.

Mary Lee S.