



Exploratory laparotomy post-surgery information

An exploratory laparotomy procedure involves a midline incision in the abdomen and a visual assessment of all abdominal organs. During this time, foreign bodies may be removed from the intestines or stomach, stones removed from the bladder and with your consent, small biopsies of organs may have been obtained for testing. Just as with human abdominal surgery, this is considered a major procedure and it is very important to follow post-surgery instructions to allow your pet to heal well.

Tonight

When you pick up your pet today you may notice the following:

- Your pet may be more drowsy than normal due to the anaesthesia and pain relief medication administered.
- It is important that they be kept indoors tonight in a warm, quiet place where they can be monitored and allowed to rest.
- Please only offer your pet water tonight. Do not give them any food tonight.
- Your pet may have a small cotton band-aid on one of their fore (or occasionally hind) legs where access to the vein was obtained. Please remove this after 2 hours of picking them up from the clinic.
- The wound, which is on the underside of the tummy, may appear mildly bruised or there may be slight bleeding from the wound. It is not normal however for the wound to continuously drip blood or for there to be bleeding or bruising developing elsewhere on the body. These findings could indicate a clotting/bleeding disorder. If this is noted please contact the clinic immediately.

Day 1

- Please start the medication/s as directed on the label/s.

Day 1-7

- If there has been no vomiting overnight please start feeding him/her small bland meals from the morning 3-4 times daily.
- Recommended diets are Hills Prescription I/d canned food or cooked chicken and white rice.
- Continue to offer water to drink as required. Please feed this diet exclusively until the revisit. Do not feed any treats or dry food until your veterinarian advises it is safe to do so.

- Bones should be avoided for at least one month following intestinal or gastric surgery.

Day 7

- Please revisit the clinic for assessment of healing of the wound and to determine whether your pet is allowed to return to normal activity and diet.

Wound care

It is very important that your pet's wound be well cared for to allow optimal healing and prevent potential complications like infection or break down of the wound. This can be done by following the subsequent steps until the wound is confirmed to be healed at the revisit.

- Do not allow your pet to lick or chew at their surgical wound. We recommend they wear an Elizabethan collar, if he/she is likely or noted to do so. This can be purchased from the clinic. This should be left on at all times until the revisit except when eating and drinking. If your pet needs to eat and drink at a time when you will be unable to monitor them, placing the food and water bowls on top of a brick or other small elevated platform that the Elizabethan collar can fit over may allow them access to their bowls more easily.
- It is not recommended to cover the wound with any dressings at home or apply any creams or lotions to the wound unless instructed to by your veterinarian.
- Do not bathe them or allow them to swim or get wet until otherwise instructed.
- Keep them quiet and refrain from walking except for on the lead for 5 minutes at a time to allow him/her to toilet. Prevent free play and running until the wound is confirmed to be healed. If your pet is usually active it may be necessary to confine them to a small area such as the bathroom or laundry. Please prevent him/her from jumping (e.g. into cars, up onto beds and couches) as this may stretch the abdominal wound.

Problems to monitor for

In most cases with good aftercare no complications will develop. However, it is important to monitor for the following concerns:

- Vomiting, diarrhoea or straining to go to the toilet. If your pet is unable to hold down water or food please contact us as soon as possible.
- Being very dull and listless
- Very pale pink or white gums
- Not starting to eat or drink the day following surgery
- Redness, swelling, lumps or severe bruising around the surgical wound on the tummy
- More than a few drops of blood or clear fluid from the surgical wound or any pus from the wound
- Redness, swelling or discharge on the leg where the band-aid was located
- Opening up of the surgical wound

If any of these are noted or you have any other concerns at all please do not hesitate to contact the clinic to chat to one of our nurses or vets. If you have any concerns outside of clinic hours please contact the Animal Emergency Centre in Hallam on 8795 7020.

Please make an appointment for your pet's revisit with our reception staff at discharge or by calling us. We all look forward to seeing you in 7 days.