

Post-operative Information: Ventral Bulla Osteotomy

Your pet has had a Ventral Bulla Osteotomy performed to treat severe middle ear disease. This involved surgically entering, thoroughly cleaning, and providing post-operative drainage of the middle ear (the “bulla”). The purpose of this surgery is to make your pet more comfortable by removing the source of chronic infection, abnormal tissue growth (i.e. polyps) and pain. The elimination of further ear cleaning duties and the foul smelling discharge are added benefits.

ACTIVITY RESTRICTIONS

- Please keep your pet in a comfortable, safe indoor location with no free access to stairs for the next 3-4 days as he/she recovers from anesthesia and surgery.
- Your pet may be groggy for the next few days. He or she may whine, purr or appear more anxious or withdrawn than usual; this may indicate pain/discomfort or side-effects of the medications. Please call your veterinarian for assistance with medication adjustments or return for exam and additional pain medications as needed.
- Avoid any rigorous activity for 2 weeks. Short, leashed walks are fine (for dogs). Please keep cats indoors until your veterinarian advises otherwise.
- As the surgical site heals, there may be discomfort and itching resulting in head shaking or pawing at the incision. To avoid any self-trauma to the site, please have your pet wear an E-collar or head “sleeve” (cloth tube over head, ears and neck; depending on the size of your pet, a tube sock with toe cut off or a long-sleeve T-shirt sleeve may work well) until the skin sutures have been removed in 10-14 days.

INCISION CARE & MONITORING

- Please monitor the incision area daily for the following signs; call if noted:
 - Gapping of incision
 - Swelling under and below incision
 - Discharge that results in more than just light crusting on skin and minimal staining of bandage or head sleeve.
- If a bandage has been applied to the head, please monitor for signs of slippage. If the bandage slips dramatically, please return to your veterinarian for adjustment or removal.
- If a drain tube collection system has been installed, the collection tube will need to be changed 2-3 times daily as directed.
 - Remove the glass tube with red rubber stopper from the end of the needle; discard.
 - Attach new/empty tube by sliding the needle into the red rubber stopper.
 - Secure the tube to the bandage on side of the head.

TESTS PENDING

- With some patients, we submit a culture sample from the middle ear to determine what antibiotic is most appropriate for the infection. The antibiotic that your pet comes home with may need to be changed once culture results are returned (3-5 days). Antibiotic therapy is usually continued for 3 weeks following surgery; longer therapy may be necessary in particularly severe cases.

- If there were any tissues removed that were suspicious for more serious disease, they will be submitted for biopsy analysis (results in 7-10 days).
- Your veterinarian will contact you with test results and will make any treatment changes as needed.

PROGRESS EXAMS

- If present, please return for drain/bandage removal with your veterinarian in 2-5 days.
- Please return for a progress appointment with your veterinarian in 10-14 days. Your pet's healing and recovery will be assessed, sutures will be removed, and any questions you have may be addressed at that time.

LONG TERM LIFESTYLE

- Patients who have had a bulla osteotomy may not hear well with that ear for several months or permanently.. Even with both ears treated with this surgery though, animals can pick up vibrations and sharp noises to assist them with navigating their environment.
- The diseased tissues lining the middle ear have been removed to the extent that was thought safe during this procedure. The middle ear has openings into the inner ear that can be damaged (short or long term) during this process. Signs of inner ear disturbance include a head tilt, eyeball twitching (called nystagmus), and unsteadiness (vertigo). Typically, patients will adjust over the first 1-2 weeks such that the nystagmus and vertigo go away; it is possible for some degree of head tilt to remain long term
- The majority of middle ear tissues mentioned above were removed because they were diseased and no longer performing their appropriate function. It is possible that remnants of this diseased tissue still remain following this procedure and can cause problems under the surgical site. If medical treatment does not permanently resolve this problem, in rare cases, a second surgical procedure is needed to remove remaining diseased tissues.