

**PROSTATE CYSTS:**

Usually quite large, but can be managed.



**Overview—“I don’t understand what an prostate cyst is; please help me understand the condition and the treatments.”**

The prostate is an organ just behind the bladder and surrounding the urethra in male dogs. When under the influence of testosterone (intact/non-neutered dogs), it will grow in size, often creating small spaces filled with fluid (“cysts”) inside the structure of the organ. These cysts can merge together, getting larger over time. These are called Parenchymal Prostatic Cysts.

Another kind of prostate cyst is called the Paraprostatic Cyst. It starts next to the prostate, but does not communicate directly with it. This type of cyst is also fluid filled and can grow quite large.

Both types of cysts are *benign, non-cancerous*; they cause problems by being too large for the abdomen and pressing on important structures (bladder and colon) causing problems related to being unable to pass urine or stool.

Most dogs with these cysts also have enlarge prostates and some are experiencing Prostatitis (inflammation or infection of the prostate). This will need to be treated medically along with treatment of the prostate cyst.

**“Why is this procedure being recommended for my pet?”**

When these cysts get too large, they start causing problems with urination and defecation. They also are at increased risk of becoming infected and causing life threatening illness if the infected material leaks into the abdomen. Treating the cyst surgically before major problems develop is strongly recommended.

**“What options do I have to treat my pet’s disease?”**

The most successful treatment of these cysts is surgical removal and “omentalization” to prevent recurrence. During this procedure, the cyst is drained from within the abdomen, the walls of the cyst are removed, and the area is packed with a natural tissue in the abdomen called the omentum; this tissue is like an internal, natural bandaid that allows the cyst site to heal from the inside.

In cases where an animal is too sick to have anesthesia and surgery, drainage with a needle from the outside is an option for temporary relief. The cyst usually will fill back up over days to weeks.

**“What postoperative complications do I need to know and understand when considering this surgery?”**

Postoperative complications are rare with Paraprostatic Cysts. Your pet may experience temporary urine leakage due to the surgical manipulation of the bladder and urethra during drainage and removal. It is possible, but rare, for the urine leakage to be permanent.

Treatment of the Parenchymal Prostatic Cyst can involve more disruption to the urethra and the nerves that support urine control. Longer duration urine leakage may occur and will need to be planned for and managed. Blood in the urine is common postoperatively, but usually will improve with time.

If any damage has occurred from a large cyst pressing on and injuring surrounding organs (bladder or colon), complications specific to treatment of those injuries may occur. These complications involve bladder and colon control (incontinence), and peritonitis from damaged bladder or colon walls.

If the cyst is infected/abscessed, the risk of peritonitis after surgery is higher. This can make a patient very sick and will require antibiotic treatment and possibly additional surgery to treat the infection.

**“Are there situations when the surgical outcome is not what we hoped it would be?”**

These cysts are often cured by surgical removal and omentalization; patients with abnormal and enlarged prostates can develop new cysts. Castration/neutering is very helpful in reducing the chance of the cysts coming back.

**“How is my pet’s life and lifestyle likely to change after this procedure?”**

The majority of patients have no longterm lifestyle changes related to the surgical removal of prostate cysts. Urine leakage, if it develops, will require daily attention to hygiene and intermittent urine tests to screen for bladder infections longterm.

**“Are there things I can do to prepare myself, my home and/or my pet for this procedure?”**

Some patients, especially those with the Parenchymal Prostatic Cysts, will temporarily or permanently leak/drip urine. Managing the hygiene of this incontinence will be necessary, using common belly bands and absorbent pads found in pet stores. Keeping the belly clean and dry daily is important to prevent skin irritation from urine leakage.

**Outpatient surgery and anesthesia** can be uncomfortable, painful, disorienting, and frustrating experiences for animals; watching your pet work through the early postoperative period and recover from anesthesia and pain medications can be worrisome, scary and frustrating for pet owners. The vast majority of the time this period of difficulty is brief, and *your pet is actually more comfortable and secure at home with you*. Sometimes it doesn’t feel like that at two in the morning when your pet is anxious and not consolable, and you are unsure of what to do. You always have the option of transporting your pet to a 24-hour veterinary facility postoperatively. If you do not want to have your pet home in the first few days postoperatively, please advise your primary care veterinary staff. They will provide contact information for a local 24-hour veterinary facility and help get an estimate for the ongoing care.

It is important that you have proper expectations about this procedure; your experience and you pet’s outcome will benefit greatly. Please discuss this information with your veterinarian when working through the decision-making process regarding **Prostate Cysts**.

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