

“So, your pet was diagnosed with a surgical condition...”

Guidance from Dr. Lara Rasmussen,
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SURGERY IS A BIG DEAL...FOR YOU, FOR YOUR PET, FOR ANY FAMILY OR FRIEND.

It requires anesthesia, it will result in some level of temporary pain, and it demands a period of restricted recovery. Underlying it all is the scary reality that it is dangerous, to some degree. We would like to acknowledge all of that and provide enough information during your decision-making and planning processes to explain the realities and make it easier for you to manage the important responsibility of making the right decision for your pet. We understand the stress of having to make the decision, the worry about the actual process of surgery and the anxiety about post-operative care.

YOU ARE IN CHARGE OF YOUR PET’S SURGICAL CARE.

To manage this responsibility well, you need to be informed. This *requires us* to tell you things you don’t know to ask, and it *requires you* to ask us about things you don’t fully understand or things that are creating concern for you. To be fully informed, you will need to be your pet’s advocate and make sure you gather the information you need to manage your pet’s care.

My role as a specialist in surgery is to guide you and your primary care veterinarian through the process, help you understand the risks of surgery, and how to optimize surgical outcomes. While surgery may seem scary to you as a pet owner, it is something with which I have many years of experience. We will try to anticipate many of your questions and help you manage the important responsibility of making the right decision for your pet.

SURGERY AS A TREATMENT TOOL

The most common way we perceive “surgery” is to fix a problem—a broken bone, a tumor, an injury. Surgeons are very good at fixing things! When deciding about surgery, we always need to ask ourselves, both you and me, whether the surgery is more likely to make something better than doing no surgery. That is the first item to check off our list. If the chance of “make it better” is higher with surgery than without surgery, it is natural to move forward. If that chance is low, then we need to evaluate other options fully. Surgery still might be better than other options, but it should not be assumed surgery is always better. Use your veterinary resources to help you navigate these decisions.

SURGERY AS A DIAGNOSTIC TOOL

Sometimes we need to look “inside” to diagnose a problem. Surgery is one way to take-a-look. Other ways are x-rays, ultrasound, MRI/CAT scan, a scope/camera. Each tool has its own benefits and risk; each gives us different information—all helpful. Surgery is probably the most invasive of the tools. The benefit of surgery as a diagnostic tool is that we are “there” and can fix the problem immediately after identifying it! But, without the other tools to guide the surgeon, we enter the surgical experience a little bit blind. This dilemma is another part of the decision-making you are faced with. Medical urgency, financial cost, risks of anesthesia all color your options. Again, use your veterinary resources to help you navigate these decisions.

Please find helpful resources in the Pet Owner’s section at www.directvetsurg.com