

Middle ear surgery (ventral bulla osteotomy)



One of the most useful and efficient ways to convey information to you about your pet is via the written word. We carefully craft these notes to give you helpful information and accurate expectations around your pet's surgical experience.

Please read this. *Please save it and read it during each stage of the recovery process.* Surprises make for a stressful time for everyone.

Photo and video examples may be found on our website: www.directvetsurg.com in the Pet Owner Portal under "DVS Resources".

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 collect samples for diagnostic tests (culture and/or biopsy) and to make your pet more comfortable by removing the source of chronic infection, abnormal tissue growth (i.e. polyps) and pain.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Please keep a note of your questions as you and your pet progress thru recovery and address them to your primary care veterinary team. ****Use your checklist at the end of these notes to make these check-ins complete.****

First few days postop

MONITORING

Please keep your pet in a comfortable, safe, indoor location without free access to stairs for the next 24 hours as he/she recovers from anesthesia and surgery.

Your pet may be groggy for the next few days. He or she may whine or appear more anxious than usual; this may indicate pain/discomfort or side-effects of the medications. Please call your primary care veterinary team for assistance with medication adjustments or return for exam and additional pain medications as needed.

Monitor appetite and attitude. *If both do not steadily improve over the next 2-3 days,* please call your primary care veterinary team or return for progress evaluation and problem-solving.

You can expect your pet to have a bowel movement within 5 days. Some animals take longer than others depending on when they last ate prior to surgery and when they started eating after surgery. It may be abnormal in color and consistency for 2-3 days. If you have any concerns, please speak with your primary care veterinary team.

Please confirm that your pet has urinated within 24 hours of returning home. If he/she does not, or you notice any problems related to urination, please speak with your primary care veterinary team.

Closely supervise your pet's movements over the first 3-4 days when s/he will be groggy and dizzy from anesthetics, pain medications and ear surgery. Do not allow access to dangerous situations/locations (i.e. stairs, furniture, small children, other pets). Limit activities to necessary events only (on leash/out to go to the bathroom; access to food/water.)

Please look at the incision when you get home; knowing what "normal" looks like is helpful later when trying to understand if the incision is healing abnormally. Photos are helpful for you and us, when communicating from a distance.

MEDICATIONS

It is likely that you have been prescribed one or more medications (given by mouth) for your pet over the first 2-3wks of recovery. During the discharge appointment or shortly thereafter, please make sure you understand:

- what each medication is being used to treat,
- what side-effects may develop, and
- whether or not the medication should be refilled and continued.

BANDAGE AND/OR DRAIN CARE

A clear, plastic bandaid may have been applied to the incision (Tegaderm). This will help protect the incision from infection from the environment. It is useful for 2-3 days. You may remove it like a "bandaid" at any time.

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.

If a tan, flat latex drain has been installed, the skin around the exit site will need to be **kept clean daily**. With a damp wash cloth, dab the skin around the drain to clean off any crusts or debris; pat dry. Then apply a thin film of Neosporin/Bacitracin/antibiotic ointment from the drug store. Covering the site with a tube of cloth (see below) will help with hygiene. Change and wash the cloth tube daily.

Week 1-2 postop

MONITORING

Please look at the incision twice daily. It should be dry, slightly red along the margins, slightly swollen/thick on the edges with a light crust down the center. Over several days, it should lose redness and swelling.

Problems to call your veterinarian about:

- gapping (the edges should be exactly touching)
- ongoing or new discharge (other than small amount of crusting)
- swelling (other than slightly raised skin near edges).

Some bruising is normal and will resolve in 5-7 days.

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 head/neck "sleeve" (cloth tube over the 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; holes cut to fit over the ear flaps will help keep the tube in place) until the skin incision is well healed (approximately 10-14 days.)

TEST PENDING

If there were any samples removed for testing, they will be submitted, and results will be available in approximately 5-7 days. Your primary care team will contact you with test results and make any treatment changes as needed.

PROGRESS EXAMS

Please return here (or contact your primary care clinic) for drain removal in 4-5days. There will continue to be some oozing from the skin hole where the drain was for 2-3 days until it scabs over. If drainage remains or recurs after this time frame, please call to discuss.

Please return to your primary care clinic in 10-14 days for a progress exam. Skin healing will be evaluated, sutures (if present) will be removed, and any questions you have will be addressed.

RESTRICTIONS

Restrict your pet from any rigorous activity for 2 weeks as s/he may be dizzy or wobbly. No running, jumping, playing. Walking around one level of the house is fine. Prevent all pets

from jumping up and down from furniture, etc. A bad landing or an awkward take-off can result in serious injury.

1-2 month postop

Please have your pet's ear evaluated at 1 month to monitor healing status. A sedated cleaning with sterile saline may be needed.

Long-term lifestyle

Hearing will be reduced lifelong. For this reason, indoor only lifestyle is best. It is common that a pre-existing head tilt or eyelid changes will NOT improve after surgery. These symptoms are a result of irreversible damage to the tiny nerves that travel through the middle/inner ear structures. Most animals adjust and accommodate to their new normal, but attention should be paid to challenging situations that require careful foot work or balance (jumping up/down, walking in dangerous locations, etc.)

Checklist:

HOME MONITORING AND PROGRESS CHECK-IN WITH VETERINARY TEAM

- Pet attitude and appetite—Are these improving daily? What are your observations? What are your specific concerns?
- Pet mobility—Is this improving daily? What are your observations? What are your specific concerns?
- Incision health—Is redness and swelling going away? Is there discharge or moisture? (Photos taken close-up and at different angles are helpful for your primary care veterinary team,)
- Pet pain level—What are your observations? What are your specific concerns?
- Other

Based on your own experience through this, we welcome and encourage suggestions to this information that may help future patients and their people. Pay it forward! (directvetsurg@gmail.com)

--The DVS Crew