



# Lone Star Veterinary Surgical Specialists

## Surgical Solutions for Your Loved Pets

### Post-operative Information: Urethrostomy

Your pet has had a urethrostomy performed to create a new, permanent opening in the urethra. This procedure creates an opening in the urethra above and usually larger than the normal opening; the remaining length of “unused” urethra may or may not have been removed. The urethra heals very rapidly, but can also heal with excessive scarring and tissue formation, leading to future issues. It is imperative to prevent your pet from traumatizing (i.e. licking/chewing) the new urethral opening during the healing phase to prevent these complications. After urethral surgery, the inflammation created by the incisions and manipulation will make your pet feel like he/she has to urinate frequently; this should subside over the next week or so. Once the new opening has fully healed after several weeks, complications are much less common.

Immediately after surgery you can expect your pet to have urgency to urinate frequently, a tendency to strain to urinate, and to have blood-tinged urine for 1-2 weeks. Please allow frequent access to their routine “bathroom” location to urinate. If your pet has some dribbling or accidents in the house, please understand that he/she likely could not prevent it during this recovery period—have patience. Your pet may also be groggy or act differently for the next few days as the anesthesia wears off. They may whine or appear more anxious than usual; this may indicate pain/discomfort, or side-effects of the medications. Please call your veterinarian for assistance with any medication adjustments, or return for an examination and additional pain medications as needed.

### Activity Restriction

- Please keep your pet in a comfortable, safe indoor location for the next 24 hours until he/she is very steady on his/her feet. Do not allow free access to stairs.
- Avoid any rigorous activity, playing or jumping for 2 weeks. For dogs, short, leashed walks are fine. Cats should remain indoors for a minimum of 2 weeks, until cleared by your veterinarian.



# Lone Star Veterinary Surgical Specialists

## Surgical Solutions for Your Loved Pets

- If you have other animals in the house, or children that play with or come in contact with your pet, please keep them separated unless you can fully supervise all interaction.

### Temporary Litterbox Modifications (for cats)

- All litter boxes in your home should be emptied of litter and washed before your cat comes home. **Only shredded paper (or paper “pellet-style” litter; i.e. Yesterday’s News) should be used for 2 weeks.** The clay and clumping-type litter contains dust that can contaminate the surgery site.

- Please empty the litterboxes frequently during this recovery period to encourage your cat to use them frequently.

### Incision Care

- Please look at the incision twice daily. It will look very red and there may be blood clots or crusts on the incision; but do not clean or disturb the incision! The newly exposed urethra needs time to adjust to being opened and exposed; the redness will subside. The size of the new opening will shrink to 1/3 to 1/2 of its immediate post-surgical size over the next 6 weeks.

- It is very important that your pet does not lick or chew the incision until it is well healed; they can severely traumatize the new opening or compromise healing. Pets tend to want to lick early in the healing period; please use an Elizabethan collar (lampshade-type collar) **AT ALL TIMES** during the first 2 weeks. If your pet is having trouble eating/drinking while wearing the collar, you may remove it while directly supervising, then replace it immediately when they’re done. **It can take only a few seconds of licking to irritate the PU site and cause scarring, which can result in stricture and possibly necessitate another surgery.**

- If urine is collecting on the skin or fur around the new opening during urination, you may apply a thin film of ointment around the incision to prevent skin irritation from the urine (i.e. Desitin ointment, A&D ointment, Neosporin ointment, Vaseline). Do not apply to the incision. As the incision heals, urination will be better controlled and this will be less of a problem.



# Lone Star Veterinary Surgical Specialists

## Surgical Solutions for Your Loved Pets

### Diet

- Encourage water consumption. Provide easy access to fresh water daily.
- Feed only what your veterinarian has recommended

### Medications

- Give medications as directed by your veterinarian

### Follow-up Instructions

- Please return to your primary care veterinarian in 10-14 days for a progress exam. Healing of the new urethral opening will be evaluated, sutures (if present) may be removed, and any questions you have or tests needing follow-up will be addressed.
- Your pet may need to be sedated to have sutures removed as they are in a typically very sensitive location - **please do not give your pet any food after 8pm the night before their recheck.**

### When to call your veterinarian:

- gapping of the incision or tissue protruding from incision;
- discharge (other than small amount of crusting);
- sutures have become damaged/missing;
- bruising and swelling that extends down the back legs and groin;
- inability to pass urine over a 12 hour period.

**\*\*Please call and return for a progress exam immediately (or go to an emergency hospital if overnight or weekends) if you notice these problems.**



# Lone Star Veterinary Surgical Specialists

## Surgical Solutions for Your Loved Pets

### Long-term Lifestyle

Pets with a permanent urethrostomy rarely have long term difficulty with urination. Sometimes male dogs may soil the inside of their legs when urinating if their stream is directed poorly. Pay close attention to the area around the new opening for the first 2 months to make sure moisture is not accumulating. It is recommended to keep the hair around the new opening trimmed close to prevent matting and soiling, especially in male cats. A small electric trimmer (like those used to trim mustaches and beards) can be helpful; trim every 2-3 months as needed to prevent problems.

Excessive scarring or “stricture” may develop many months after surgery and require further evaluation and treatment. If you notice smaller than normal pools of urine, a weak urine stream or excessive straining to urinate, please have your pet evaluated by your veterinarian. Because the new urethrostomy is bypassing normal urethra that usually acts as a barrier to bacteria, pets with permanent urethrostomies are at higher risk for bladder infections. Your primary care veterinarian may recommend a routine for urine testing depending on your pet’s circumstances. Signs to look for that suggest bladder infection include: increased frequency of urination, an urgency to urinate, straining to urinate (i.e. squatting longer than usual), blood in the urine, excessive licking of the new urethral opening. Consult your primary care veterinarian if you notice these signs.