



# Lone Star Veterinary Surgical Specialists

## Surgical Solutions for Your Loved Pets

### Postoperative Care: Exploratory Laparotomy

An exploratory laparotomy is an abdominal surgery that allows us to evaluate abdominal organs, and address issues ranging from an intestinal obstruction to bladder stone removal. Just as with human abdominal surgery, this is considered a major procedure and it is very important to follow post-surgery instructions to allow your pet to heal well.

Immediately after surgery there may be some bruising or swelling around the surgical site, but this should continue to improve daily. Your pet must be kept confined and have restricted exercise for at least 2 weeks after surgery. The incision should appear clean and dry, with skin edges well apposed and no redness or discharge from the site evident. Do not bathe your pet until sutures are removed 2 weeks after surgery.

Remember that these are general recommendations, so defer to your veterinarian's specific instructions for your pet.

#### GI surgery:

- Your veterinarian may recommend a specific feeding plan for your pet after surgery. Usually we recommend feeding smaller, more frequent meals with easily digestible food like boiled chicken, white rice, or a commercial diet like Hill's i/D for the first week or so after surgery - if doing well can slowly transition back to their normal diet.
- Keep an eye on water intake - some pets want to drink large volumes of water which can make them vomit, so you can provide smaller bowls of water or fill the bowl with ice and let them chew it, or drink it as it melts.
- Monitor closely for any vomiting or diarrhea - please contact your vet if these signs are noticed, especially days 3-5 post-operatively.

#### Cystotomy (bladder stone removal):

- It is very common for pets to urinate frequently, strain, or have bloody or blood-tinged urine for several days post-operatively. As long as your pet is producing urine and otherwise doing well, their signs should continue to improve daily as they heal.
- Make sure to provide your pet with plenty of opportunities to go potty, since they will likely need to go more often than usual.



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- Sometimes pets are recommended to stay on a specific diet to prevent formation of bladder stones in the future, and it is imperative they are fed **exclusively** that diet with no other treats or snacks.

### Exercise:

1. You will need to confine your pet to a small area (like kennel/crate, small laundry room or bathroom works great) during the healing process. For dogs, limit activity to short leash walks for potty breaks until cleared by your veterinarian . Do NOT let your pet off the leash even in the backyard, as they will likely feel good enough to run and play long before their belly is healed. No jumping, climbing stairs or rough-housing with other pets or people.

### Incision Care:

1. Monitor the incision daily for signs of infection: redness, swelling, pain or discharge. Some mild swelling and bruising immediately after surgery is expected, but should continue to improve daily while healing.
2. Do **NOT** allow licking of the incision as this could cause an infection or open the incision. An Elizabethan collar (cone) should be kept on your pet at all times for at least 2 weeks until the sutures are removed.

### Follow-up examinations:

1. Recheck to remove sutures in 10-14 days

If you have any questions or concerns during your pet's recovery, please do not hesitate to contact us. Thank you for letting Lone Star Surgical Specialists take care of you and your pet!