

Perineal hernia

The Procedure

This procedure is performed in dogs that have a swelling or lump under the skin, situated next to the anus (in the perineal region). This lump is due to structures from the abdomen bulging out between the muscles around the bottom. The muscles can become weak due to the effects of testosterone. You may notice a bulge around the perineum when your dog goes to defaecate, which can then progress to a permanent swelling next to the anus. This can contain just fat from the abdomen, but sometimes the prostate or bladder can become trapped which is more serious. If your dog has this condition and is suddenly finds it difficult, or unable to urinate, PLEASE SEEK URGENT VETERINARY ATTENTION.

Surgical treatment to correct the hernia, as well as castration in intact males, is recommended to reduce the risk of deterioration and serious complications mentioned above. Due to the effects of testosterone on the muscles, castration must be performed. This should be done a minimum of 3 weeks before surgery. There is an option to have an implant placed that reduces testosterone (superlorin) 3 weeks prior to surgery, with castration then being performed on the day of the perineal hernia operation.

Perineal hernia surgery involves opening up the swollen area, replacing the contents back into the abdomen, then closure of the muscles of the perineum. In some cases, the abdomen may also be opened to allow for the abdominal organs to be assessed, or to provide additional anchoring of organs within the abdomen, to reduce the risk of recurrence of the perineal hernia.

Surgical Site

It is important that your pet is not allowed to access the surgical site during the phase of skin healing, to minimise complications associated with patient interference. This will mean that an Elizabethan collar will need to be worn. If your pet cannot eat or drink with the collar on, it is fine for it to be removed for this, but please replace it at all other times.

We would recommend cold compress for 3 days after the surgery if your pet will tolerate it. This reduced inflammation and provides additional pain relief. If you have a cold pack or a bag of frozen vegetables, wrap this with a tea towel and apply to the rear end for 10 minutes three times a day.

Medication

Please follow the post operative discharge sheet that will be provided on the day of surgery. Your pet will come home with a combination of anti-inflammatories/pain killers and antibiotics.

They may also be given stool softeners (e.g lactulose) for a number of days after surgery.

Post operative checks

3 days and 10 days post operatively to check the surgical site.

Exercise

Please do not exercise your pet for 10 days after the surgery to allow healing to progress. Toileting should be supervised on a lead in the garden to check all is well, but also to minimise exercise.

Once you have had your final post operative check at 10 days, exercise can be re-introduced.

Post operative expectations and potential complications

The aim of the surgery is to keep the abdominal contents in the abdomen, and allow your dog to toilet normally.

Potential complications associated with this surgery are rare, but it is important to discuss this prior to surgery. They include:

- 1) Post operative infection
- 2) Wound breakdown
- 3) Rectal prolapse
- 4) Urinary problems associated with previous bladder entrapment
- 5) Lameness associated with nerve entrapment
- 6) Continued straining
- 7) Recurrence of perineal hernia
- 8) Development of perineal hernia on the other side if only 1 side was affected

Dietary changes that will help your dog pass faeces more easily, are also recommended (e.g. fibrogel).