



Postoperative Care After Mass/Tumor Excision/Reconstruction

1. Exercise Restrictions

Leash walk to urinate and defecate for 3 weeks; avoid unrestricted activity outside, and avoid playing with other dogs/pets inside the house until the wound is completely healed. Stitches should be removed in 12-14 days.

2. Some swelling of the wound is normal, as is some bruising, which can be very dark red/blue. As healing progresses, the swelling can move outward and the bruising may spread.

Sometimes the wound will ooze some blood during the first 24-48 hours at home. You should not be alarmed at this; you can hold a cotton sponge over it for 5-10 minutes to stop the bleeding.

3. What is a normal postoperative course?

Your pet should want to drink, and may eat with a little coaxing in the first 24-48 hours following surgery. He/she should be urinating normally; however, it may take 2-3 days for a bowel movement. Alternatively, some pets experience slight diarrhea after general anesthesia. In any case, things should be returning to normal after a few days.

4. Other Potential Complications

Opening of the incision (dehiscence): The loss of the skin sutures or staples can occur from mechanical trauma if the pet is allowed to lick the site (infection may also occur) or if there is too much tension on the wound closure due to the site where the incision is located or excessive movement of the patient. If only a few sutures are lost, but the skin edges remain apposed then there is no concern. Do not let your pet lick or scratch the area. If the incision begins to gape open more than a centimeter or drain fluid from an opening then you should contact your veterinarian. **Seroma formation** – accumulation of serum underneath the incision. Seromas occur because the watery component of the blood or serum accumulates in the spaces left after opening skin and subcutaneous tissues, especially if a mass has been removed. This is a benign complication and most often the fluid will be resorbed by the body. However the swelling can become large at times or may drain through the incision, creating a mess and risking de-

velopment of an infection. To help speed the resolution of a seroma, confine your pet and limit their activity and movement, prevent them from licking the site and you can also apply warm compresses to the area to encourage reabsorption of the fluid by the body. If the swelling is increasing or begins to drain, contact your veterinarian. **Infection:** Bacterial infection of an incision will cause increased swelling, pain, and formation of pus, an opaque, often yellowish thick discharge. You may also feel warmth and tenderness at the incision. Your pet may not feel well, not want to eat or seem to be in more discomfort. If any of these signs occur contact your veterinarian.

Please follow up with your regular veterinarian regarding any pending laboratory or pathology results.

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