



Postoperative Care: Ear Canal Ablation with Bulla Osteotomy

Your pet has had an ear canal ablation with a bulla osteotomy. The entire cartilage ear canal has been removed, and a portion of the bony circular middle ear (bulla) has been likewise removed. This is so we could gain access to the middle ear and remove all of the abnormal tissue, foreign debris and infection in the ear canal and middle ear. A rubber tube (Penrose drain) has been placed from the center of the bony middle ear to exit out the neck region to allow further drainage of infection post-operatively. The ears may be sutured over your pet's head for two weeks to allow air circulation to the operative site, to facilitate drainage, and to prevent swelling of the ear flaps as a result of head shaking, etc. Two weeks following surgery the drains are removed and the ears let down into their normal position.

1. If the drains fall out - don't panic! Cut off the remaining portion of the drain and two times a day; apply hydrogen peroxide to the opening in the skin where the drains came out.
2. The bony middle ear (bulla) sits next to the temporomandibular joint (jaw joint). Some pets will be reluctant to eat or will experience mild pain on opening and closing the jaw post-operatively. If your pet is experiencing reluctance to eat or chew, we would encourage you to feed soft food.
3. Many pets have "dry eyes" with their ear disease. Also, in some pets the eye lids will not blink for several weeks following surgery and the side of the face is paralyzed (Bell's palsy). In these cases, eye lubricants (drops, ointment) must be applied to the eye several times daily until the eyes are working normally again.
4. If your pet is not too sore, you can apply warm, moist compresses to the side of the face one to two times daily for 5-10 minutes to make them feel better. Following this, you can gently clean the area and then apply Vaseline below the drains to prevent scalding and to make cleaning easier.
5. Wipe the plastic Elizabethan collar off as needed to avoid unsightly and smelly accumulation of drainage and discharge on it from the ears. You can also tape a diaper/etc. to the inside of the collar to catch the drainage.
6. Your pet will need antibiotics for one month following surgery. These can be given in a little food (meatball, peanut butter or butter) as needed.

If you have any questions regarding your pet's post-operative care, please don't hesitate to contact us. We have an answering service 24 hours a day and on weekends. Just call our regular number and follow the instructions.

Thank you very much for using VCA Animal Specialty Group!