



Amputation

Amputation includes removal of part or all of an arm or leg, removal of a toe, or removal of the tail. This procedure is most often performed due to presence of a tumor, a broken bone that cannot be fixed or severe trauma to the area. Your veterinarian will have discussed other options prior to amputation. If a tumor is present, a biopsy or fine needle aspirate will have been recommended to determine the type of tumor prior to removal. Chest x-rays and or an abdominal ultrasound may also be discussed to look for signs of spread if cancer is suspected.

Amputation Procedure

Your pet will be placed under general anesthesia. An incision will be made in the skin around the body part to be amputated. The body part will then be removed and the skin will be closed as cosmetically as possible. A bandage may be placed on the area. If a tumor was present, sending the body part for biopsy will be recommended.

Complications

Incision: Swelling, bruising, infection and dehiscence (opening of stitches) are a possible complication. These can be minimized by keeping your pet strictly rested and keeping the incision clean during the recovery period. If your pet allows, you can also ice their incision for 10 minutes twice daily for the first three days following surgery, then move to warm compressing for 10 minutes twice daily for the remainder of the recovery period.

Rarely, extensive surgery, especially involving removal of large body parts, such as a leg, can lead to blood clot formation. This typically cannot be predicted. If this occurs quickly to the lungs, heart or brain, sudden death may occur, although rare.

Recovery and Homecare

After your pet's amputation, they will need to be confined in the home or crate and taken out on a leash for bathroom breaks only for 2 weeks to allow the incision to heal. Your pet will also require a cone during that time to prevent licking and self-trauma to the incision site.

If bandages were placed, these need to be removed or replaced every 2-3 days. If the amputation was performed due to a tumor that was found to be cancerous, your veterinarian will discuss referral to an oncologist. Your pet may need further intervention, such as chemotherapy.

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990 Price Street, Pismo Beach, CA 93449 | (805) 773-0474 | (805) 773-5902 Fax | www.PismoBeachVet.com