



Description: A laminectomy is a surgical procedure that involves removing a small window of bone over the top (dorsal laminectomy) or side (hemilaminectomy) of the spinal column to expose the spinal cord.

Indications: Laminectomies are used in the surgical treatment of intervertebral disc disease, tumors of the spine or spinal cord, lumbosacral stenosis syndrome, and sometimes as part of the treatment of spinal fractures or luxations.

Postoperative Care

Medication: Give any prescribed medication as directed. Do not give human pain medication to pets without first consulting with a veterinarian.

Exercise: If the spinal cord condition is not irreversible, nerve function to the legs should gradually return and improve over the coming days and weeks. Once your pet is walking again, it is important that they not be allowed to run or jump for at least 6 weeks. Ideally, jumping from furniture should be permanently discouraged to decrease the chance of recurrence. Short, controlled walks outside to urinate or defecate are allowed. It is best to keep the pet in a crate when you aren't present to directly supervise your pet's activity levels.

Urination: Make sure that your pet is urinating regularly. If you don't see a good stream of urine or a good sized puddle, this may mean that he or she is having trouble completely emptying the bladder voluntarily. Catheterization or manual expression of the bladder may be necessary until bladder function recovers. Observe for symptoms of a urinary infection, such as dark, foul-smelling, or bloody urine. Give our office a call if you notice any of these problems.

Physical Therapy: If your pet is not yet able to stand or walk by the time of discharge from the hospital, then physical therapy should be performed. We recommend the following physical therapy be performed 2-3 times daily:

- Assisted standing (with support) for 3-5 minutes
- Passive range-of-motion exercises for 5 minutes
- Massage leg muscles for 10 to 15 minutes
- Swimming after consulting with the surgeon
- Patients with prolonged or permanent rear limb paralysis may benefit from custom-made carts to allow movement

Recommended Follow-Up: Please schedule an appointment for suture removal 7 to 10 days after surgery. In addition, please schedule a recheck if swelling or discharge is noted from the incision line, if neurologic signs seem worse, if vomiting occurs, or if there is trouble urinating.

Prognosis: The prognosis depends upon the severity of the neurologic deficits present before surgical intervention. The prognosis for intervertebral disc disease is good if deep pain sensation is still present at the time of surgery. Potential complications may include urinary infections secondary to bladder atony, wound infections, seromas, iatrogenic spinal cord trauma, and gastrointestinal ulcers. Your pet's recovery and well-being are our primary concerns, so please do not hesitate to call and speak with a surgical technician or surgeon if there are any questions regarding your pet's recovery