



Description: A ventral cervical slot is a surgical procedure that involves a surgical approach to the vertebra through an incision underneath the neck. A small hole or slot is then made through an intervertebral disc and part of the two adjacent vertebrae into the spinal canal to remove ruptured disc material and relieve pressure on the spinal cord.

Indications: The procedure is used for treatment of ruptured intervertebral discs in animals with severe neck pain and/or neurologic deficits related to the cervical spinal cord.

Postoperative Care

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

Exercise: Your pet should be confined to a crate or pet carrier for at least one month postoperatively. He or she may be taken outside for short walks for elimination purposes only. Please replace your pet's collar with a chest harness to prevent reinjury to the surgical site. Jumping from furniture should be strictly avoided for at least two months, and if possible permanently, to decrease the likelihood of disc problems elsewhere in the spine.

Physical Therapy: If the disc caused nerve deficits in any of your pet's limbs, then muscle massage and passive range-of-motion exercises may be helpful until he or she is walking again. Consult with the surgeon regarding recommendations for swimming.

Recommended Follow-Up: Please schedule an appointment for suture removal 7 to 10 days after surgery. Please contact us immediately if: (1) pain or nerve signs seem worse, (2) swelling or discharge is present from the incision, (3) vomiting occurs, or (4) your pet has trouble urinating.

Prognosis: The prognosis following cervical slot depends largely on the neurologic status of the patient prior to surgery. Patients with complete paralysis of all four limbs require a tremendous amount of nursing care, and the prognosis is generally guarded to poor. On the other hand, the prognosis for complete relief of significant improvement of symptoms in patients with neck pain and minimal neurologic deficits is excellent. Complications of the surgery are rare, but potentially serious, and include worsening neurologic deficits due to spinal cord trauma, serious hemorrhage, and vertebral luxation.

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.