



Description: A celiotomy or laparotomy is a surgical incision into the abdominal cavity.

Indications: A celiotomy is performed for a variety of reasons, including diagnostic purposes, such as obtaining biopsy specimens, and therapeutic reasons, such as abdominal tumors, gastrointestinal obstructions, and peritonitis.

Postoperative Care

Medication: Pain medication is generally only required for the first 2 to 3 days following surgery. Give pain medication only as prescribed and do not give human drugs without first consulting with a veterinarian. Other medications may be prescribed, depending on your pet's medical condition and diagnosis. If vomiting is consistently observed following medication, contact our surgical staff.

Diet: Unless a special diet has been advised or other dietary changes have been recommended, it is generally best to get your pet back on his or her normal diet as soon as possible. Feedings should be smaller and more frequent than usual to allow the gastrointestinal tract time to recover from the surgery. Water should be available free choice. The appetite is likely to be decreased for a few days. Prolonged refusal to eat may indicate a problem.

Exercise: Limit exercise to short leash walks until the sutures are removed, and do not allow running, jumping, or playing with other pets for three weeks.

Signs of potential problems: Please observe your pets for any of the following problems:

- Repeated vomiting
- Severe lethargy, listlessness, or anorexia
- Black or bloody diarrhea
- Swelling, redness, or discharge from incision
- Abdominal distension
- Licking or chewing the incision
- Increased abdominal pain

Recommended follow-up: Please schedule an appointment for suture removal 7 to 10 days after surgery. In addition, please contact us immediately if any of the above problems are noted or as instructed by our staff to treat your pet's underlying condition.

Prognosis: The prognosis for celiotomy is highly variable depending upon the underlying medical condition. Potential complications may include incision problems, dehiscence of the surgical closure, self-trauma to the incision line, seroma formation, infections, abdominal adhesions, and gastrointestinal disturbances.

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.