



Description: A mandibulectomy is a complete or partial resection of the mandible (the lower jaw), and a maxillectomy involves removal of varying portions of the maxilla (the upper jaw) and hard palate.

Indications: Mandibulectomy and maxillectomy are usually performed for oral tumor removal, but are occasionally used to treat severe oral fractures or infections. These procedures are well tolerated by the patient and heal rapidly because of the area's excellent blood supply.

Postoperative Care

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

Diet: Feed a softened or gruel consistency diet for at least 2-3 weeks. Your pet should be able to lap the food with his or her tongue. Water should be available free-choice. If your pet won't eat voluntarily, try hand feeding your pet. Rarely, animals will not eat for an extended period following this surgery. If your pet isn't eating in 3-4 days, he or she may need to have a feeding tube placed. Do not allow your pet to have access to chew toys, hard treats, or dry dog food for at least three weeks following surgery.

Exercise: Limit exercise to short leash walks for 2-3 weeks following surgery. Do not allow your pet to rough-house or play with other pets during the period of restricted activity.

Signs of potential problems: Observe your pet for problems, and contact us if you notice any of the following:

- Prolonged listlessness or anorexia
- Foul odor from mouth
- Break-down or openings of incision line
- Visible masses or swelling in the surgical area

Recommended follow-up: Please schedule rechecks in approximately 4 days following surgery, and any external sutures may be removed 10 days after surgery. Most oral sutures will be absorbable and will not need to be removed. Please contact us immediately if any of the above problems are noted. For pets that have had mandibulectomy or maxillectomy procedures performed for oral tumor excision, monthly reevaluation for signs of tumor regrowth is recommended.

Prognosis: The prognosis for excellent function and quality of life for dogs following reconstructive facial surgery is quite good. Dogs generally adapt easier than cats to these procedures. Slight facial deformity is expected, but is usually found to be quite acceptable to most owners. A slight increase in drooling is occasionally noted following mandibulectomy. The long term prognosis relating to the tumor removed is quite variable and will depend on the tumor type. For certain aggressive types of tumors, additional treatments such as radiation and/or chemotherapy may be indicated.

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.