

## ***Post-operative Discharge Instructions following Brachycephalic Airway Surgery***

Brachycephalic airway surgery refers to the surgical trimming of the excessively long soft palate at the back of the throat, to open the airway and allow improved air passage and minimise degenerative changes of the airways and the risk of breathing difficulties in the future.

Healing may take 4-6 weeks, during which time there should be a gradual improvement in breathing function. There will be some swelling of the back of the throat in the early period following surgery, and close attention to the breathing function and effort within the first 24-48 hours should be given. Care should be taken to not allow over activity or excitement which may cause respiratory distress and increased breathing demands. Should you have any concerns please contact your veterinarian or the Animal Emergency Service (Tanawha 5445 1333, Noosaville 5430 6900) immediately.

Following trimming of the soft palate there are no external wounds and the sutures used should dissolve in the following 4-8 weeks, occasionally they may require removal if they are causing irritation to the back of the throat, generally noted as gagging, retching or an odour.

Additional procedures also performed include rhinoplasty (nose job) to open the nasal air passages, and possibly excision of the tonsils and/or the laryngeal sacculles, also found at the back of the throat.

Rhinoplasty (nose job) has also been performed to open the nostrils. Small sutures are in place and should not require removal unless they are causing irritation, and may require sedation to perform. Please use the Elizabeth collar for 14 days to allow the wound to heal and avoid self-trauma and scratching the sutures out prematurely.

The tonsils and/or laryngeal sacculles will be removed if required to further open the air passage, but is not essential in all patients. Sutures which are used will not require removal.

There is a minor risk of inhalation of food during the early post-operative period as the airway heals and the inflammation resolves. Signs of aspiration pneumonia include lethargy, inappetence, a soft cough or fever. Hand feeding small amounts of soft food in the early period of recovery will reduce the risk of inhalation of food.

Should there be any difficulty breathing following discharge at home, please contact your regular veterinarian or the Animal Emergency Service (Tanawha 5445 1333, Noosaville 5430 6900) for advice or assistance.

We would rather ensure the recovery is progressing as expected and avoid complications by early recognition

*All follow-up should initially be performed by your regular veterinarian, who will contact Advanced Veterinary Surgery for further advice if required.*

### **Re-examination by your Regular Veterinarian**

2 weeks following surgery for assessment, progress check and examination of the sutures in the nose. Any further re-examinations will be advised by your regular veterinarian.

Please don't hesitate to contact your veterinary clinic at any stage for examination if you have concerns.

### **Medications**

A course of anti-inflammatory, antibiotic and possibly antacid medications will be dispensed. Please read the instruction labels carefully and contact your veterinary clinic should you have any queries. Should there be any gastrointestinal signs (vomiting, diarrhoea), please stop the medication and contact your veterinary clinic.

### **Post-operative Care**

Rest and short lead controlled walks in the backyard only for toileting purposes as required for 2 weeks, followed by a gradual increase in the length of lead controlled walks thereafter.

Free exercise off the lead and return to normal activity generally at 3-4 weeks after surgery.

I would recommend the use of a chest harness in the future, and avoid the use of a collar or lead about the neck to minimise pressure on the windpipe and larynx.

Please use the Elizabethan collar provided for 14 days to allow the wounds of the nose time to heal and prevent self-trauma and scratching the sutures out prematurely.

### **Diet**

Please feed small boluses (small meatball sized) portions of soft food which is able to be easily swallowed.

Please handfeed for 2 weeks to minimise the risk of aspiration pneumonia and inhalation of food.

Please do not feed milk, dry food or biscuits, bones or hard chews until 4 weeks.