

Informed Consent

Cleft Palate

Your pet has been diagnosed with cleft palate. This is a condition where the tissues in the top of the mouth don't fuse how they are supposed to, leaving a hole or defect between the oral cavity (mouth) and nasal cavity (nose). The consequence is material (food or water) in the mouth getting into the nose and can cause irritation (rhinitis), maybe infection, and could lead to aspiration (inadvertent inhalation of material meant to be swallowed). You have elected surgical repair of the defect (cleft), and although surgery is very successful with a good prognosis, there are a few complications we need to make you aware of. If you have any questions or concerns, please let us know.

The risk of complications after cleft palate is low, about 30% of cases. Here are some potential risks:

Infection- this is a risk with any surgery and is usually treatable with oral antibiotic therapy

Recurrence/failure of repair/dehiscence- this is likely the most common complication. Usually the defect is smaller, but revision surgery is usually recommended.

Tooth extraction- if a much more aggressive procedure is recommended either initially or after a failure, sometimes, we recommend teeth to be removed to allow us to have more tissue to cover the defect

Aspiration pneumonia- even after repair, if there is a wound complication (recurrence, as described above), it's possible your pet can get aspiration pneumonia after surgery, and this can be life threatening

Damage to tissues in the area could include muscle, nerves, blood vessels, salivary ducts/glands. Permanent damage is highly unlikely.