

Informed Consent

Gastropexy ("Stomach Tack")

You have elected to have your pet undergo a surgical procedure called a gastropexy, where the stomach is sutured to the body wall. The purpose of gastropexy is to prevent torsion, a syndrome called gastric dilation and volvulus (GDV). GDV is potentially life threatening, so prevention would be ideal. The stomach heals very well and the prognosis with surgery is generally excellent, however, complications occur in about 10% of patients. Below, general risks of abdominal surgery are outlined, followed by those specific to the gastropexy procedure. Let us know if you have any questions or concerns.

Abdominal Surgery Risks

Skin incision infection- this is a risk with any surgery, and usually treatable with oral antibiotic therapy

Damage to abdominal structures- this could cause bleeding, or contamination by contents of the intestines

Adhesion formation (scar tissue formation in the abdomen)- scar tissue can impact the tissues in the abdomen in the future

Peritonitis- this is a rare but serious infection within the abdomen. If this occurs, additional therapies may likely be recommended.

Abdominal wall dehiscence (opening)- this can occur when the incision line used to close the abdominal wall fails. At first, the abdominal contents may stay covered by skin and subcutaneous tissue and revision is recommended. If they are not covered, emergency intervention is required.

Abdominal foreign body- very rarely, sponges or even instruments can be left in the abdominal cavity during surgery. We take precautions to ensure this doesn't happen, but it is possible.

Gastropexy

Gastrointestinal signs- following the gastropexy procedure, the stomach is held in place and it is common for there to be some signs consistent with an upset stomach. Reduced appetite or vomiting may occur for a time after surgery, but they usually subside soon after surgery.

Inadvertent entry into the stomach- this is not usually a concern, because we can close it, but if the incision goes into the stomach, that includes risk of failure of that incision site. If the incision in the stomach leaks, the stomach contents ends up in the abdomen and that causes infection and irritation.

Failure of gastropexy- if the incision line holding the stomach to the body wall fails, the intended protection is not present. Unfortunately, there may not be a way to know that unless the pet suffers a gastric dilation and volvulus (GDV) episode.

Bloat (gastric dilation)- while the gastropexy prevents the torsion (or volvulus) component of GDV, the gastropexy cannot prevent the dilation, or bloat, component. This isn't usually life threatening, but care, diagnostics, and medical therapies are often recommended.

Air in the chest (outside of the lungs, called pneumothorax)- can occur during the gastropexy procedure. Additional therapies may be needed.