

# Informed Consent

## Reconstructive Surgery

You have elected to have your pet undergo a surgical procedure that could include a skin graft, flap, or other reconstructive technique. There are a variety of situations when reconstructive techniques are used, including chronic wounds, mass removal, and trauma. A variety of techniques are used, but they are similar and have a similar set of risks. Although the complication rate is quite high (up to 75% or more), the technique usually reduces the size of the wound bed significantly, and if part of the graft or flap fails or dies (called necrosis, the most common complication- see below), the remainder of the wound usually heals without additional surgery. Prognosis is generally good after surgery. However, we need to make you aware of the risks and complications associated with this surgery. If you have any questions or concerns, please let us know.

Graft or flap ischemia and necrosis (death)- the skin used to cover the defect needs a blood supply. If it doesn't have enough of a blood supply (ischemia) , it may lead to skin necrosis (death). In most cases, a portion of the flap or graft dies, but it's rare that the entire graft or flap fails.

Hematoma (blood clot)/seroma (fluid accumulation)- if a flap procedure was performed and fluid accumulates between the flap and the body, this will require therapy to allow proper healing. The fluid must be removed so that it doesn't keep new blood vessels from incorporating in to the skin flap.

Swelling- this is common and can occur usually in the limbs, but usually resolves over time

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

Tumor recurrence- if tumor removal and a reconstructive procedure are performed at the same time, there is risk of tumor recurrence at the reconstruction site. This may occur because we can see and feel tumors, but we cannot see or feel the microscopic cells. If some tumor cells are left in the wound bed, they may regrow.

Wound dehiscence (incision break-down)- if the incision opens, additional surgery may not be needed, but additional therapies would likely be recommended

Lack of re-innervation- when the skin heals, it may or may not form a new nerve supply. This can be permanent or temporary. The numbness could bother your pet. It also makes the reconstructed site more susceptible to trauma or self mutilation.

Cosmetic defects- there can be changes in how your pet looks. Our goal is to get the skin to cover the wound completely. Even if we completely cover the defect, we cannot be sure how the hair will grow back (hair thickness, direction, color, length), how the scars will look, and how the finished skin will appear in comparison to the normal skin next to it (it may look thin, for example), etc.