

Informed Consent

Removal of a (Presumed) Rectal Polyp

You have elected to have your pet undergo a surgical procedure called polyp removal. Rectal polyps are benign outgrowths of the rectal wall. They are diagnosed pre-operatively on the basis of their appearance (red), behavior (often extrudes during defecation, bleeds easily), and what they feel like (often pedunculated, or on a stalk). The diagnosis is presumptive and can most commonly be confirmed AFTER surgery, after the tissue is submitted to the lab. Surgery to remove polyps is very straightforward and prognosis is excellent, but there are a few risks and complications associated with this surgery. If you have any questions or concerns, please let us know.

The risk of complications after rectal polyp surgery is low, about 10% of cases. Here are some potential risks:

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

Wound dehiscence (opening)- if the incision opens up, usually additional medical care is needed, but not usually more surgery

More extensive surgery is required- if we start operating and find out that the mass doesn't behave like a polyp, more extensive surgery may be required, and this could alter the risk and types of complications. These complications could increase risk of infection and dysfunction (fecal incontinence), and possibly stricture of the rectal wall. Some of these risks may be difficult to predict.

Tumor recurrence- if cells are left behind, the tumor may recur. The risk of this is higher if we find after removal that the tissue was not a benign polyp, but a malignancy.

Hemorrhage- bleeding can be moderate, but isn't usually severe

Rectal prolapse (eversion of the tissue of the rectum) - this is usually noticeable while your pet defecates. Usually this is self-limiting, but if not, additional therapies may be recommended

Rectal structure (narrowing of the diameter of the rectum)- this is quite rare, unless surgery must be more aggressive than expected.