

# Informed Consent

## Tail Amputation or Complete Caudectomy

Your pet has been diagnosed with a tail tumor or injury or malformation (screw tail) that requires tail amputation. Screw tail is common in English bulldogs, French bulldogs, Boston Terriers, etc and leads to skin fold dermatitis. Screw tail is treated with a type of tail amputation called a complete caudectomy, or complete removal of the tail to its base. In either case, there is no other likely treatment option that can manage the condition and preserve function of the tail or keep the local tissues healthy. You have elected a tail amputation to treat this condition. Generally, recovery is very good following surgery. The long term prognosis may depend on the underlying cause for amputation, however. Outcome is excellent with trauma cases or those involving cancers far from the incision that do not tend to spread. In any case, we need to make you aware of a few of the common complications that could arise after this surgery. If you have any questions or concerns, please let us know.

The risks of complications after tail amputation repair is low, about 5-10% of cases. Here are some potential risks:

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

Wound dehiscence (incision break-down)- if the wound opens, additional therapies may be needed

Skin ischemia (devitalization)- if the skin at the end of the tail lacks enough blood supply, it could die and additional medical or surgical treatment may be needed

Recurrence of tumor- Depending on tumor type, amputation of the tail may not always be curative. Local recurrence or spread of the tumor beyond the primary site are possible.

Complications associated with complete caudectomy:

Fecal incontinence- dissection in complete caudectomy is higher up on the tail base and we have to apply some tension (pull) to remove the unhealthy tissues. Excess tension can stretch the nerves that help control continence. The dysfunction is usually temporary and resolves with time.

Inadvertent violation of the rectal wall: in complete caudectomy dissection to remove the tail tissue occurs just above the rectum. In the process of removing tissues, the rectal wall could be punctured. In itself, that is not a major issue, but the risk of surgical site infection and dehiscence goes up in that scenario

Persistent dermatitis- if there is a skin fold that persists or recurs at the surgical site, additional therapies may be needed