

## **Informed Consent**

### **Thyroidectomy (Removal of the Thyroid Gland)**

You have elected to have your pet undergo a surgical procedure called thyroidectomy. Thyroidectomy is recommended in cases of thyroid tumors (more common in dogs) and in some cases of hyperthyroidism (over-active thyroid) in cats. The goal of surgery is to remove abnormal tissue by removing one thyroid gland. The procedure is usually straightforward, however, there are some inherent risks. If you have any questions, please let us know.

The prognosis after thyroidectomy is usually good, but complications arise in about 15% of patients. Here are some of the most common:

Bleeding- dissection of thyroid glands, and especially large thyroid tumors can produce potentially life-threatening hemorrhage because of the proximity of the glands to the major arteries in the neck

Damage to the nerves in the area can result in voice change or a syndrome called “Horner’s syndrome” which includes a dilated pupil, everted third eyelid and a sunken appearance to the eye on the affected side. These changes may be permanent but are not of functional significance

Aspiration pneumonia (inadvertent inhalation of food/water/saliva that is meant to be swallowed)- this may occur either singularly or associated with laryngeal paralysis (which may be independent or secondary to nerve damage during dissection)

Anesthetic complications- these could include disturbances in blood pressure, heart rate and rhythm, etc may occur secondary to the disease process present in the thyroid

Damage to parathyroid glands- the parathyroid glands are attached to the thyroid glands and if surgery is only on one side, the parathyroid glands on the remaining thyroid gland will provide function, but if surgery happens to be required on both sides, calcium regulation may be affected and supplements may be required for life

Hypothyroidism- if surgery happens to affect both sides, low thyroid function will occur and supplements may be required for life

Thyroid storms- this can occur prior to surgery in cats due to excess stress

Failure to cure/recurrence of disease- this can happen in cats or dogs and in dogs, metastatic (spread) disease could occur

Rare complications include risk of bilateral disease where both thyroid glands require removal. In those cases, supplementary thyroid hormone and probably calcium may be required for life.