

Informed Consent

Ectopic Ureter

Your pet has been diagnosed with a congenital abnormality where one or both ureters (the tubes that bring urine from the kidneys into the bladder) do not actually enter the bladder at their normal location, but instead, they enter the urethra. This leads to urinary incontinence and urinary tract infections. You have elected to have your pet undergo a surgical procedure to correct this abnormality. Specific procedures vary, only slightly and include incision into the bladder and urethra. The prognosis with surgery is generally fair to good. However, complications occur in about 15% of patients. It is common to have continued urinary incontinence (in up to 50% of patients), however, it is usually much improved. Below, general risks of abdominal surgery are outlined, followed by those specific to ectopic ureter procedures. 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. However, once the abdominal incision fails, surgical revision is recommended. If the abdominal contents become exposed, 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.

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Leakage from the bladder/urethra/ureter incision site (dehiscence)- if the incision in any of these tissues leaks, the urine ends up in the abdomen and that causes irritation and infection. Revision surgery is recommended.

Failure to resolve incontinence- as mentioned, surgery may resolve urinary incontinence in some patient (33% of cases). However, many dogs with ectopic ureters have problems not only with the anatomy (ureter positioned abnormally) but also the function of the urinary bladder and urethral sphincter. Persistent incontinence can occur, despite a "successful" repositioning of

the ureter in to the urinary bladder. Medical management can further improve urinary incontinence in these patients (33% of cases). However, there are a subset of patients in which incontinence persists despite all treatment attempts (33% of cases).

Stricture- the urethra and ureter are tubular shaped structures and they heal well, but sometimes scar tissue forms that narrow the inner diameter (lumen). If the diameter is significantly narrowed, it could lead to urinary obstruction and additional therapies may be needed.

Urinary tract infection- this can occur with any urinary tract surgery and may require antibiotics

Hemorrhage (bleeding) and hematuria (bloody urine)- is common and can be profuse, but is generally a short-term issue and rarely life threatening

Urinary tract obstruction- swelling can cause obstruction to the flow of urine. This is usually temporary but additional therapies may be needed

Renal (kidney) failure- obstruction, infection, or other systemic problems may cause damage to the kidneys and if severe, the kidneys could fail.