

CANINE EXPLORATORY LAPAROTOMY DISCHARGE INSTRUCTIONS



Thank you for entrusting us with your dog's care today.

Your pet has undergone a surgical procedure called an **exploratory laparotomy (ex-lap)**. This involves a surgical incision along the midline of the abdomen to examine and/or treat internal organs. A relatively long incision is often required to provide adequate visualisation of the abdominal cavity.

In many cases, **biopsies** of organs such as the liver, stomach, or intestines are collected to help diagnose the underlying condition. If biopsies were taken, they have been submitted to an external veterinary pathology laboratory, and results are typically available within **5-7 business days**. Your veterinarian will contact you once the results are received.

As this is a major abdominal procedure, appropriate **rest and aftercare** are essential to ensure optimal healing.

Immediately After Surgery

- Your dog may be drowsy or quiet for the first **12-24 hours** due to the anaesthetic. Mild nausea is also common.
- Offer a small, bland meal and water in small amounts that evening unless otherwise instructed.
- If your dog seems uncomfortable at home, please call the clinic for advice.
- The surgical site has been closed using **intradermal (under-the-skin) sutures**. These are not visible on the surface and are generally well tolerated.

Please provide a **clean, quiet, and comfortable** space for your dog to rest. Supervise any interactions with other pets to ensure your dog is not subjected to rough play or activity.

Post-Operative Care: Next 10-14 Days

Although your pet may appear to have recovered quickly, **internal healing continues** for several weeks. Please follow the care instructions below to help prevent complications:

Rest & Activity

- Restrict activity for **10-14 days**:
 - No running, jumping, playing, or off-leash walks.
 - All toilet breaks should be on-lead.
- Avoid stairs and elevated surfaces if possible.

Wound Care

- Check the incision **daily** for:
 - Redness, swelling, discharge, or lump formation

- Prevent licking or chewing of the wound. If necessary, use an **Elizabethan collar (cone)**—available from the clinic.
- **Do not bathe** your dog or allow swimming for **10–14 days**.

Medications

- Complete the **full course** of any prescribed medications.
- Contact the clinic if you notice vomiting, diarrhoea, or any side effects.

General Health

- Appetite should return within 24 hours. If your dog is not eating, seems lethargic, or is otherwise unwell, please contact us.

Follow-Up

A recheck appointment is generally recommended **10 days after surgery**, unless advised otherwise by your veterinarian.

When to Contact the Clinic

Please call us if you notice:

- Redness, swelling, or discharge from the incision
- Loss of appetite or vomiting
- Pale gums or increased breathing effort
- Any unusual behaviour or signs of discomfort

Your care at home plays a critical role in your dog's recovery. If you have any concerns or questions, don't hesitate to contact the clinic.

We wish your dog a smooth and speedy recovery!

