

## Discharge Instructions for Postop Care Following Parathyroidectomy

**Surgery performed:** Parathyroid tumor removal

**Prognosis:** We have submitted the mass for analysis, and we will call you as soon as the results are received. It generally takes 7 days for the biopsy analysis to be completed. Parathyroid masses commonly are either parathyroid hyperplasia or parathyroid adenomas. Both of these are benign. Dogs with parathyroid hyperplasia may have recurrent hyperplasia, as the remaining parathyroid glands may develop the same issue; this causes hypercalcemia again. Parathyroid tumors are rarely a malignant cancer.

**Exercise:**

1. Please keep your pet quite for the next two weeks. This includes no running, jumping, or playing.
2. Your pet may be taken on walks three times daily. Use a harness instead of collar, as the collar may rub on the incision.
3. Climbing stairs is permitted.
4. Your pet should not participate in any activity that causes your pet to move the neck aggressively (tug or war, etc.).

**Diet:**

Regular food can be fed. If your pet refuses to eat the regular diet, you may cook up a mixture of meat (lean chicken or beef) and a carbohydrate (such as rice, pasta or potato) may be offered.

**Incision:**

1. The incision is currently covered with an band aid and should be removed tomorrow. Once the bandage is removed, please monitor the incision daily for redness, swelling, or discharge and call if any of these are seen.
2. A small amount of swelling is normal and this will resolve in 7 days. Cold packing the area with a frozen gel pack wrapped in a dish towel for 10-15 minutes three times daily for 3 days will help minimize the swelling and bruising of the surgical site.
3. Do not allow your pet to scratch at the incision, as this may lead to infection or breaking open of the incision. If your pet scratches at the incision, an E-collar should be placed on your pet. Alternatively, light wrap with a bandage or scarf may be used to protect the incision.

**Warning signs of hypocalcemia (low calcium level in the blood):**

1. A parathyroid tumor was removed from your pet's neck. This tumor produces excessive amounts of parathyroid hormone which causes a high level of calcium in the blood (hypercalcemia). In some patients, the hypercalcemia can cause the remaining 3 parathyroid glands to go to sleep. After the parathyroid tumor is removed, the remaining parathyroid glands may remain in a dormant or sleeping state, which can result in a serious complication of low calcium (hypocalcemia) in the bloodstream. Hypocalcemia is experienced about 2 to 3 days after the surgery.
2. In order to prevent hypocalcemia, calcitriol has been prescribed. Your pet will be slowly weaned off this medication over a number of weeks (pending the blood calcium levels). Continual communication with us regarding the calcium levels that your primary care veterinarian measures is imperative for a successful outcome. We will make calcitriol dose recommendations after each calcium blood test is completed by your primary care veterinarian.

3. ***&&PT/he/she/it should also be monitored for signs of low calcium which include loss of appetite, facial itchiness (scratching or rubbing the face), facial twitching, weakness, or seizures, and should be seen immediately if any of these occur.*** Please make sure that you know where the nearest emergency hospital is located in the event that your pet experiencing signs of hypocalcemia.

**Information about calcitriol:** This medication is a type of rapidly acting vitamin D. This medication results in increasing the level of calcium in the blood stream. Calcitriol is best absorbed on an empty stomach. As a result, a convenient time to give this medication is at bedtime.

**Calcium blood level blood tests and recheck evaluations:**

1. Your pet should have a calcium blood test on the third day after surgery by your primary care veterinarian. Either ionized calcium or total calcium can be measured by your primary care veterinarian. Please send a text message of the calcium level and normal reference range to your pet's surgeon and the dose of calcitriol will be adjusted at that time. The cell phone number of your pet's surgeon will be provided to communicate the results as soon as you get them.
2. The incision should be check for appropriate healing about 2 weeks after surgery by your primary care veterinarian.

**When your pet arrives home:**

1. Upon arriving home, excitement or excessive food/water may lead to vomiting. Please refrain from offering food/water for several hours. Your pet may experience a decreased appetite after surgery. You may need to tempt and/or hand feed your pet to help stimulate the appetite. Please call if your pet is not eating or drinking at all.
2. Your pet will most likely be tired from surgery and hospitalization. Allow plenty of rest and do not be surprised if mild lethargy or depression is noted during the first night at home.

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Typical medications prescribed to the pet having a parathyroidectomy:

1. Nocita – used to numb the surgical site during surgery
2. Calcitriol 20 ng/kg once daily, at bedtime. This dose will be gradually reduced, pending the results of the calcium tests.