

July 2023

Foreign Body Surgery

It's happened to almost all of us: you see your pet eating something they shouldn't be eating, and before you can grab it out of their mouths, they swallow it. Most of the time, the foreign material moves through the intestinal tract without any issues, but sometimes the object can get stuck. Read more about what happens if your pet happens to eat something he/she shouldn't have.

Symptoms of an Obstructions

There are a couple of major symptoms to watch out for if your pet is obstruction. Vomiting and diarrhea are the two most common signs of an obstruction. Your pet may also refuse to eat (anorexia) and may become dehydrated. There also tends to be abdominal pain involved as well, which can be mild or severe depending on the location and size of the obstruction, the pet's tolerance to pain, etc.

Your vet will likely take x-rays to help confirm an obstruction if there is any suspicion. However, obstructions can sometimes be difficult to identify just from x-rays alone. Sometimes, further diagnostics such as a barium series are performed to help confirm the presence of an obstruction.

Unblocking the Obstruction

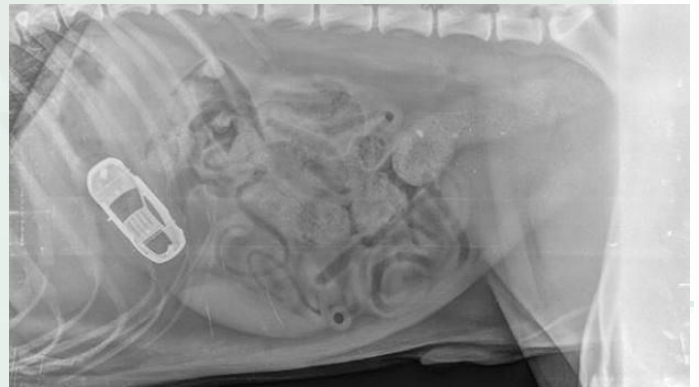
Once an obstruction is confirmed, an abdominal exploratory surgery is often the next step. Your veterinarian will check every part of the GI tract to make sure that all of the obstructive material is identified and removed. Depending on the location and amount of material, several incisions into the GI tract may be needed to completely remove all of the foreign. If the obstruction has been present for a long period of time, an R&A (resection and anastomosis) may need to be performed, where very damaged sections of the GI tract are removed.

Sometimes, if an obstruction is located in the stomach or esophagus, an endoscopy can be performed. With an endoscopy, the foreign material is removed through a mechanical scope that is put down the esophagus. This is much less invasive, as it helps to avoid an incision into the abdomen and GI tract. As a result, recovery is often much shorter than with an abdominal exploratory surgery.

Homeward Bound

Once your pet's abdominal exploratory surgery is finished, your pet will stay in the hospital until he/she is no longer dehydrated and ideally has started eating. Once sent home, your pet's activity needs to be restricted until the incisions have completely healed.

One of the biggest things to remember is that your pet WILL NOT learn from his/her mistakes (unfortunately)! Make sure to do a search around your house to make sure that there are no other foreign objects that your pet might decide to ingest in the future!



Best regards,
Rachel Kielinger, DVM



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