

Foreign Body Surgery

Dogs and even some cats love to eat things that they shouldn't and this can become a very serious problem if the animal doesn't "pass" the object that they ate. Some small objects can be "passed through the GI tract" while others cannot. In our experience there are several common items that animals like to eat:

- ✓ Corn cobs
- ✓ Balls
- ✓ Socks, underwear, handkerchiefs
- ✓ Jewelry
- ✓ Rocks
- ✓ Toys (or their stuffing)
- ✓ Plastic bags
- ✓ String
- ✓ Fishing line and fishing hooks
- ✓ Coins
- ✓ Collars and leashes
- ✓ Children's toys

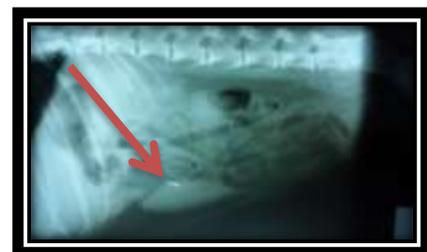
If your pet is unable to pass the object (either by vomiting or defecation) it can become a dangerous and potentially life threatening problem. The most common way to correct it is through surgery to remove the object.



It can be hard to determine if your pet ate something that they weren't supposed to because they tend to do it when you are not home. Most of the time the signs that show up 3 to 5 days later are the first indication of a problem. It can take 24 to 36 hours for material to move through the GI tract. It may then take additional time for the animal to start developing clinical signs. The most common signs of a GI tract upset include:

- ✓ Vomiting
- ✓ Diarrhea - with or without blood present
- ✓ Small or no fecal output
- ✓ Loss of appetite
- ✓ Abdominal pain
- ✓ Dehydration

Most of these signs are common to several different types of GI upset and your veterinarian would have to do further diagnostic tests to determine if the cause of the problem is a foreign body or not.



Your veterinarian will want to do a complete physical exam and will focus on the abdomen to see if they feel a foreign body. They will also want to take x-rays to look for signs of a foreign body. Sometimes the x-rays may need to include barium (which is a contrast medium) to help highlight the foreign body. Diagnosing a foreign body can be difficult because not all



foreign bodies are easily seen on an x-ray and very few are able to be felt in the abdomen. Once your veterinarian has ruled out other problems such as pancreatitis, they may recommend doing an exploratory surgery that will allow them to visually check the GI tract for any abnormalities.

Prior to surgery your veterinarian will do bloodwork and place an IV catheter to start your pet on IV fluids, pain medications and antibiotics. Once the veterinarian has the bloodwork results they will proceed with the surgery. If a foreign body is found they will remove it and then repair any damage that may have been done. They will also check the rest of the GI tract to ensure that nothing was missed.

Your pet can spend several days in the hospital after surgery to ensure that they are eating, as well as passing stool and not vomiting. Your veterinarian will send your pet home on pain medications and antibiotics.

Unfortunately some dogs and even the occasional cat can have more than one foreign body surgery performed. If your pet is prone to eating things the best ways to prevent it are to kennel them while you are not there or have them wear a basket muzzle. A basket muzzle allows them to eat and drink normally but they cannot chew on or swallow things that they should not.



If you would like more information about foreign body surgeries you can e-mail us at info@cgvet.com or call us at 920-668-6212.

