

sao

SMALL ANIMAL ORTHOPAEDICS

Discharge Instructions Following BOAS surgery

BOAS stands for Brachycephalic Obstructive Airway Syndrome. It is a complex condition which is common among brachycephalic breeds such as British and Australian Bulldogs, French Bulldogs, Pugs and Cavalier King Charles Spaniels.

These dogs have narrowed airways which makes normal breathing difficult. Heavy exercise, or overheating can be dangerous for these dogs. Long term respiratory effort leads to numerous secondary changes inside the back of the throat, only some of which can be addressed with surgery.

The best time to perform BOAS surgery is when the patient is younger - within the first 2 years of life. This helps to reduce the secondary changes that may follow.

The surgery itself can involve one or all of the following:

- widening the nares (nostrils)
- Resection of some of the soft palate
- Resection of everted laryngeal sacculles
- Resection of tonsils

The goal is to allow increased airflow and minimise resistance.

There are other factors which contribute to airway narrowing which can't be addressed. Some of these include:

- Excessively narrow trachea
- Large tongue
- Excessive pharyngeal tissue
- Secondary changes such as partial laryngeal collapse or even tracheal collapse

- Obesity which makes the airways narrower

Some patients with advanced disease should be treated at a specialist centre where 24h emergency support can be provided.

Most young dogs with BOAS can be treated surgically with a knowledgeable surgeon and have a very successful outcome. Improvement of breathing is often noticeable within the first 24-48h after surgery.

What to expect after BOAS surgery:

Most dogs will have noticeably quieter breathing sounds straight away, with swelling gradually improving over the following 2 weeks after surgery.

There may be a small amount of blood around the nostrils and mouth for the first 24h. If any significant bleeding is found, then you should contact your vet or go to an emergency vet.

Retching, small vomits or excessive swallowing may be noticed in the first 5-7 days after surgery. There is medication that can help with this.

If your dog appears to be struggling to breathe, then they need to be taken to an emergency centre straight away. It may even be advisable to transfer your dog straight after surgery to an emergency centre for overnight observation. Your vet may discuss this option with you if they feel it is necessary.

Small dissolving sutures may be noticed around the nostrils. They will fall out on their own within a couple of weeks. An Elizabethan collar will be placed around the neck to avoid any damage to this area while its healing.

Re-examination

Your vet will schedule a recheck 5-7 days post surgery

Medication

Some of the following medications may be dispensed:

- an antacid such as omeprazole to help with reflux
- An antiemetic to help with nausea or vomiting
- An anti-inflammatory to help with post-op swelling

Aftercare

All boisterous activity needs to be avoided in the first 2 weeks. No running, jumping, rough play with other dogs. Keep your dog in a cool environment to avoid overheating.

Minimise stress wherever possible

Soft food only for 2 weeks. No hard biscuits, no bones, no hard toys

After 2 weeks, if your dog is doing well, then you can transition back to normal activity and normal diet.