

## Thoracotomy

### Indications include:

- A tumor, abscess or other surgical disease in the chest
- biopsies of tissues in the chest
- closure of bite wounds that perforate into the chest
- cardiac diseases, such as PDA, vascular ring anomalies

### Preoperative workup and other diagnostics:

Most of these cases are referred either emergently, urgently, or on a scheduled basis, after a work up other services to further investigate & delineate your pet's condition, but can include:

- General physical examination prior to anesthesia
- Preoperative laboratory work & imaging:
  - Mostly done prior to referral to the soft tissue surgery service
  - Cardiac workup: including echo, and potentially pericardiocentesis (removal of fluid from the pericardial sac).
  - Other Imaging can include CT, radiographs, ultrasonography.
- Histopathology, culture, cytology of samples obtained during surgery.

### Procedures:

The chest cavity will be entered. A tube (thoracostomy tube) will be placed during surgery to remove air from the chest (and potentially fluid) – and will be removed after surgery once it is safe to do so.

### Complications:

- Anesthesia: as with any surgical procedure, there are always risks associated with general anesthesia, this risk is increased for thoracic surgery as well as for pets with heart conditions.
- Surgical site complications: this can range from a local dehiscence, to a fluid pocket (seroma) that will resolve on its own, or can be a local abscess that might need to be treated surgically.
- Bleeding during surgery, or after surgery
- Air leakage (pneumothorax) after surgery.

Your surgeon will discuss these complications in more detail during your pet's visit.

### In hospital care:

- Hospitalization and close monitoring in ICU is needed during recovery until the thoracostomy tube is removed. Intravenous medication and intravenous fluids are typically needed postoperatively to recover from surgery. Depending on the extent of surgery, duration of the disease/clinical signs, and other co-morbidities, this stay can be only the first night after surgery, or can be several days, until your pet is healthy enough to continue care at home.

**At home care:**

- Exercise restriction: leash walks/exercise restriction for the first 10-14 days after surgery to allow all the incisions to heal.
- Incision care: this includes keeping the incision dry and clean, as well as wearing an E-collar as long as the incision is still healing (first 10-14 days postoperatively).

**Prognosis:**

Depends on the reason for the surgery, and the extent of surgery.