Cervical Disc Fenestration Consent Form

Your pet has been diagnosed with neck pain without a bulging or ruptured disc. This condition requires surgical repair. There are two different surgeries for cervical disc disease in dogs. Since your pet is having neck pain that we believe is coming from the disc itself (discogenic pain) then we do a fenestration where we simply remove all the discs in the neck without actually knowing which one is causing the problem. Pets can function well without discs as they do not walk upright like we do. We remove all the discs to minimize (not prevent) future problems and recurrence. If your pet has a bulging or ruptured disc on a CT scan or is having weakness in the legs or is partially paralyzed (paretic and not walking well), then we need to do a cervical slot decompression where we actually fenestrate all the discs and make a slot up into the canal to remove the ruptured disc. This is much more expensive and has greater risk and your pet will need a myelogram or CT to determine which disc is causing the compression of the spinal cord. Neurosurgery is a combination of both art and science and the neurosurgeon will evaluate your pet’s radiographs and neurological status and determine the best method of treatment given your pet’s age, type and location of rupture, and the home environment for post-surgical rehabilitation. The surgeon may utilize one or a combination of procedures that may be best determined during the surgery. The goal of any neurosurgery is fast return to function of the damaged spinal cord and nerves without doing any further harm. As with any surgery on the spinal cord, inadvertent complications can arise including worsening of your pet’s condition.

In most cases, there will be no complications and your pet will return to normal in 1-2 weeks. Some patients have very dramatic improvement of their pre-operative within the first day or two. Most patients recover from the immediate post-operative pain within 24 hours. After fully discussing the planned surgical procedure and associated risks with your doctor or the surgeon, please sign the consent for surgery below:

The undersigned owner or authorized agent of admitted patient _____________________ hereby authorizes the admitting veterinarian (and his/her designated associates or assistants) to administer such treatment as is necessary to perform the below-mentioned procedure. The nature of the procedure(s) has been explained to me and no guarantee has been made as to results or cure. I understand that there may be risk involved in these procedures. I consent to the administration of such anesthetics or tranquilizers as are necessary.

Anesthetic Risks: (Although every effort is made to make anesthesia as safe as possible including vital sign monitoring and use of the most up to date anesthetic agents and equipment, understand that anesthesia has inherent risks). The incidence of complications from anesthesia is extremely low and we do not anticipate any in your pet but on rare occasions the following can occur:
   1. Allergic reaction to the anesthetic agents
   2. Heart rhythm abnormalities
   3. Untoward reactions to the gas including drops in blood pressure or respiratory difficulties
   4. Just like in humans, on very rare occasions, general anesthesia can result in death.

We are prepared and will treat any anesthetic reactions if they occur, but general anesthesia is never completely without risk, just like driving a car.
I consent to the following surgical procedure(s): Fenestration of cervical disc spaces.

Surgical Risks Include:
1. Infection which may require additional testing and medication at an additional cost.
2. Blood clots that can lodge in major organs causing stroke or rarely death.
3. Delayed healing of the neck pain (this is not under the control of the surgeon)
4. Worsening of neurological status that may be temporary or permanent, including complete paralysis.
5. Rarely, patients that have a fenestration can have paresis or cord compression from a disc that has a tear in the annular ligament before the surgery and unretriveable material moves into the spinal canal and compresses the spinal cord days, weeks or even months after the fenestration. These patients will then need to have a myelogram or preferably a CT and a cervical slot at a reduced fee as the fenestration has already been performed on the other disc spaces.
6. In cervical (neck) disc surgery, acute sympathetic blockade or severe bleeding can both result in death, although both of these conditions occur very rarely.

Strict adherence to post-surgical care and medicating of your pet will minimize these potential complications and serious problems are very uncommon in most cases.

Date Pet Owner/Agent Signature Phone I Can Be Reached At Today