



## Foreign Bodies

### Diagnostic Plan

History  
Physical examination  
Abdominal palpation  
Abdominal X-rays  
Upper G.I. series  
Stool analysis  
Blood tests  
Urinalysis  
Endoscopy

### Therapeutic Plan

Fluid therapy  
Antibacterials  
Surgery (to remove foreign bodies)  
Nothing by mouth for 24-48 hours

### Nutritional Plan

Post surgically, a highly digestible food fed in small portions

## Foreign Bodies

Your pet has a foreign body in its digestive tract. Clinical signs depend on where the foreign body lodges, whether it perforates the digestive tract, and whether it partially or completely obstructs the digestive tract. Common clinical signs include retching, vomiting, appetite loss, dehydration and depression. The pet may also have changes in stool ranging from constipation to diarrhea. Treatment includes removal of the foreign object and repairing the damage it may have caused, as well as follow-up with the veterinary health care team.

### What You Should Know About Foreign Bodies

Ingestion of foreign bodies is relatively common in dogs. Cats occasionally also eat objects they shouldn't. Dogs ingest such things as bone fragments, rubber balls, toys and many other items. Cats tend to ingest linear foreign objects such as string, yarn and fishing line. Foreign bodies may be ingested by any dog or cat, but are more common in younger animals because of their less discriminate eating habits.

#### Diagnosis

As your veterinarian examines your pet, he or she may or may not be able to palpate (examine by touching) foreign bodies in the abdomen and the gas and fluid accumulation they may cause. X-rays may be done to see if the object can be seen. Items such as bone fragments, needles and fishhooks may be visualized. Other objects may not be as obvious and special contrast agents such as barium may be given to help visualize them. A lighted instrument called an endoscope may be used to find foreign bodies in the esophagus, stomach, upper small intestine and colon. Blood tests are often done to evaluate the hydration and electrolyte status of the pet.

## Treatment and Home Care

Your veterinarian will stabilize your pet's condition first by treating dehydration and electrolyte imbalances with intravenous or subcutaneous fluid therapy. Antibiotic therapy is often begun at this time. When your pet is stable enough for anesthesia, your veterinarian will surgically remove the foreign body and repair any damage the foreign object may have caused.

Home care consists of giving all prescribed medications and diet. Follow your veterinarian's instructions for exercise restriction. If your pet has an incision, check it at least once a day for swelling and discharge and call your veterinarian if you see these changes. You should also call your veterinarian if your pet has a loss of appetite, vomiting, diarrhea or signs of depression. Skin sutures will need to be removed by your veterinarian when the incision has healed.

You should take precautions to prevent your pet from ingesting other foreign bodies. This includes feeding no bones to your pet, removing all toys small enough to be swallowed, taking steps to keep your pet from raiding the garbage can and placing all strings, needles and fishhooks out of your pet's reach.

## Nutritional Plan

If your pet has had surgery to remove a foreign body, your veterinarian may suggest another dietary change. Patients that have had intestinal surgery may benefit from highly digestible foods during the recovery process. Foods with these nutritional characteristics include Hill's® Prescription Diet® i/d® Canine and i/d® Feline Gastrointestinal Health. Nutrition is especially important for optimal growth and proper development of the immune (protective) system in younger pets. Optimal nutrition should also reduce the health risks associated with feeding excess levels of nutrients such as calcium and phosphorus, which can contribute to skeletal problems, and excess calories, which can contribute to obesity. Foods formulated for optimal growth that avoid excess levels of nutrients include Hill's® Science Diet® brand pet foods.

## Transitioning Food

Unless recommended otherwise by your veterinarian, gradually introduce any new food over a seven-day period. Mix the new food with your pet's former food, gradually increasing its proportion until only the new food is fed.

If your pet is one of the few that doesn't readily accept a new food, try warming the canned food to body temperature, hand feeding for the first few days, or mixing the dry food with warm water (wait ten minutes before serving). Feed only the recommended food. Be patient but firm with your pet. This is important because the success or failure of treatment depends to a large degree on strict adherence to the new food.

---

*Presented as an educational service by*

---



## Home Care Instructions

Client's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Patient's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Medication(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Nutritional Recommendation: \_\_\_\_\_

Follow-Up Appointment: \_\_\_\_\_

(Hospital Stamp Area Above)

REGULAR VISITS WILL HELP OUR VETERINARY HEALTH CARE TEAM PROVIDE FOR YOUR PET'S BEST INTEREST.