

Sandy Animal Clinic

Authorization for Ear Cropping Procedure - Page 1

Ear cropping is a surgical procedure where a portion of the ear flap is removed to allow the remaining section of the ear to stand erect. This cosmetic procedure is performed by a skilled veterinarian in order to create the pristine show-quality look you desire. Ear cropping is done for Schnauzers, Boxers, Doberman Pinschers, Great Danes, Bouvier Des Flandres, American Staffordshire Terriers, Miniature Pinschers, Boston Terriers and Manchester Terriers.

What will my dog's ears look like? Ear cropping is based on the breed of your dog. Some breeds such as Doberman Pinschers & Boxers have a variety of ear crop styles that you can choose from. We recommend you schedule a consult appointment with the doctor or certified technician prior to your pet's procedure to review pictures and discuss the ear crop style you would like.

Age my dog should be? The optimum time for ear cropping is generally between 8-12 weeks of age for large breed dogs and 12-16 weeks of age for small breed dogs. At this young age, the cartilage in the ear is still forming WHICH enables us to train the ears to stand as your puppy grows. We will no longer perform the procedure if your dog is over 20 weeks because the cartilage becomes less flexible and there is a higher probability that the ears will not remain standing on their own.

Preparing my dog for the procedure? Because the surgery is performed at such a young age, your pet must be current on all vaccinations so that he/she does not succumb to common diseases during the healing process. We also ask that your pet is fasted starting the night before through the day of the surgery. Some anesthetic drugs used may induce vomiting and it is important that your pet comes in with an empty stomach.

How is the procedure performed? Your pet will be under general anesthesia throughout the surgery in order to control pain. The ears will be prepped for the surgery after which the veterinarian will trim away portions of the ear forming the desired shape. The entire process will take approximately one hour.

What type of care is needed post-operatively? After the surgery we will place a Styrofoam cup on your pet's head. This provides a base to adhere the ears to, allowing them to heal properly and begin training the ears to stand. After spending a night at the hospital, your pet will go home with the attached cup and an e-collar placed around the neck with the cone opening towards the body. This will help prevent your pet from scratching the ears and cup with his/her legs. It is also essential for you to train your pet not to scratch his/her ears since they are very vascular, meaning that they will bleed easily if the incision site is rubbed or scratched. Furthermore, repeated damage to edge of the ear will cause scar tissue to form thus altering and possibly degrading the final look of the ear.

The ears require a two week period to heal, during which time you will be applying an antibiotic ointment to the edge of the ears and giving oral antibiotics and pain medication as directed by the veterinarian. During this time, your pet can have normal exercise and activity. The ears will be sore but this does not usually hinder your puppy's playfulness. If for whatever reason, your pet is able to remove the cup before the two weeks are up, don't panic. Continue to apply the ointment, give the oral medications, and bring your pet back in at the end of two weeks scheduled for the suture removal and first taping.

Since your pet is young and the ears are still flexible this brief lapse in training will not affect whether the ears stand in the end or not. Ideally, the best option is training your pet not to scratch the ears right away because if he/she scratches at the cup now, he/she will scratch the tape later. A few training tips are listed at the end of this article. When you pick up your pet after the surgery, we ask that you schedule a drop off appointment 14 days out. During this appointment we will give your pet a minor sedative to remove the Styrofoam cup and sutures then the ears will be taped for the first time.

Ear taping and how long the ears need to be taped? Ear taping is a method of wrapping the ear in an upright position. There are various methods used when taping ears, many of which do not produce the correct look at the end of the taping process. The style of taping we employ differs depending on breed. Breeds with longer crops necessitate the use of a cylindrical post that acts as a support base for the entire length of the ear. Breeds with shorter crops do not require a post; instead, the ears are wrapped using a method called circle taping.

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Weekly ear tapings are required to ensure the best results. The duration of weekly ear tapings depends on the length of the crop, the breed of dog, the age at which the surgery was performed, the strength of the ear cartilage and whether your pet leaves the tapings alone. Longer ear crops, performed on Great Danes for example, may require 6 months to a year or more before they stand on their own. You must be prepared for this commitment before the procedure is performed. In *rare* cases another surgery may be needed to place an implant in the ear to facilitate the ears to stand. Shorter ear crops, like those performed on Miniature Pinschers, stand on their own within a few weeks. Six ear tapings are included in the price of the procedure; there is an extra charge for each additional taping.

If the taping comes undone, falls out, or gets wet, we ask that you *do not* take any steps to re-tape the ears at home, rather bring your pet to the clinic at your *earliest* convenience. There are a number of risks involved if the ears are taped or cared for incorrectly including but not limited to: infection, a reaction to the tape, cutting off blood supply to the ear which may cause a portion of the ear to die.

What are the risks and complications involved? Placing a pet under general anesthesia will involve a minimal risk. The safety of modern anesthesia has increased substantially with increased knowledge, modern equipment and modern anesthetic drugs. Anesthesia is, however, never trivial or routine. To safeguard your pet we must properly evaluate his or her ability to utilize and metabolize the drugs needed through a blood analysis test. We also recommend placing an intravenous catheter and administering fluids and antibiotics to your pet throughout the procedure. We will discuss these recommendations with you when you drop off your pet on the day of his/her surgery.

If the ears are improperly cared for infection can occur at the incision site, which will delay healing time; however, this is uncommon as long as medication is given according to directions from the veterinarian. Your pet may be prone to skin irritation or an allergic reaction to the adhesive used. If a severe reaction persists, a rare condition, all taping will be permanently discontinued. As previously discussed, damage to edge of the ear from scratching will generate scar tissue formation altering the final outcome. Ear posts that are left in too long, over a week's time, or become damp will lead to ear infections. Ear infections are a source of constant pain resulting in excessive head shaking and scratching. Taping may need to be postponed and the infection treated in these cases. Any delay in taping will increase the time until the ears stand independently. Lastly, a very small percentage of ears will never stand properly because the cartilage supporting them is too weak. Unfortunately this complication cannot be foreseen because the ear cartilage develops and strengthens as the puppy grows.

Training Tips The key to training a puppy not to scratch is consistency. If the puppy begins to scratch, clap your hands or say NO! When he/she stops, give lots of praise or offer a treat. If the scratching continues after clapping or saying no, gently pull the paw away then distract your puppy with their favorite toy. Continue the training process until your pet understands that scratching is an inappropriate behavior and remember be consistent.

Authorization for the Procedure

I authorize and direct the veterinarians at Sandy Animal Clinic to perform the ear crop procedure. I have read the above information and understand the nature of the procedure. I understand that no guarantee has been made as to results. I further understand that there may be risk involved with the procedure. I agree to pay in full for all services rendered, including those of unforeseen medical or surgical complications.

Signature:

Client or Designated Representative

* For Doberman Pinscher & Boxer owners, please indicate which style of ear crop you have chosen.

Military Cut (Doberman's Only)

Short Cut

Show Cut