

Quick Tips - Surgery

Cheri Nielsen, DVM, MS, DACVS

Biliary Mucocele

Gallbladder mucoceles are an increasingly important cause of extra-hepatic biliary disease in dogs. The gallbladder wall develops cystic mucinous hyperplasia and secretes excessive amounts of mucus that builds up within the lumen. Diagnosis is generally via abdominal ultrasound, as affected gallbladders have a classic “kiwi fruit” appearance. Early in the disease, laboratory abnormalities and clinical signs may be mild or even absent. However, significant secondary changes are likely as the disease progresses and can include gallbladder enlargement, extension of mucoid bile into the hepatobiliary ducts, and ischemic necrosis of the gallbladder wall. Affected patients typically show cranial abdominal pain, GI upset, and laboratory evidence of biliary obstruction with or without systemic inflammation. Rupture of the gallbladder or biliary duct results in acute abdomen due to focal or generalized bile peritonitis. Although mucoceles are sometimes incidental findings at necropsy and resolution with medical treatment alone has been reported, surgical treatment is generally considered the treatment of choice. The risk of surgical complications increases with the severity of the disease. Dogs with evidence of active or impending rupture require emergency surgical treatment. Patients with clinical signs and laboratory abnormalities should have cholecystectomy as soon as practical, as rupture could occur without warning and is associated with increased peri-operative morbidity. Dogs with no clinical signs or laboratory abnormalities can undergo cholecystectomy (and may be candidates for a laparoscopic surgical procedure), or their condition can be monitored closely for progression prior to surgical intervention. Long-term prognosis is excellent after cholecystectomy to treat biliary mucocele.

I hope you found this information helpful,

Cheri Nielsen



PET EMERGENCY
& SPECIALTY CENTER OF MARIN

901 East Francisco Blvd.
San Rafael, CA 94901

415.456.7372
www.pescm.com