



## 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

Postsurgically, a low-residue food fed in small portions  
Consider overall patient condition when determining the protein level and Caloric density of the food

## 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. Treatment includes removal of the foreign object and repair of the damage it caused, as well as follow-up with the veterinary health care team.

## What You Should Know About Foreign Bodies

Ingestion of foreign bodies is common in dogs and cats. Dogs commonly eat bone fragments, fishhooks, and toys such as rubber balls. 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 palpate (examine by touching) foreign bodies in the abdomen and the gas and fluid accumulation they cause. X-rays will reveal the presence of bone fragments and dense objects such as needles and fishhooks. Special contrast agents such as barium may be given by your veterinarian to help outline foreign bodies that normally would not show up on x-rays. 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 determine the severity of dehydration and electrolyte and acid-base problems.

## Treatment and Home Care

Your veterinarian will stabilize your pet's condition first by treating dehydration, acid-base, and electrolyte imbalances with 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 the damage that it caused.

Home care consists of giving all prescribed medications, following your veterinarian's instructions for exercise restriction, and checking your pet's incision at least once a day for swelling and discharge. You should report a loss of appetite, signs of depression, and changes in the incision to your veterinarian. Skin sutures will need to be removed by your veterinarian.

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® Canine i/d® and Feline i/d®. Nutrition is especially important for optimal growth and proper development of the immune, or 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 could cause skeletal problems, and excess calories, which could cause obesity. Foods formulated for optimal growth that avoid excess levels of harmful nutrients include Hill's® Science Diet® Puppy and Kitten for growing pets and Science Diet® Adult for dogs and cats one to six years of age.

## 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). However, do not add water to your cat's food. Feed only the recommended food. Do not feed additional salt or any snacks that may contain sodium. 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.

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## 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.