



ENDOVET

R E F E R R A L S

Thoracoscopic Pericardiectomy



Introduction:

At EndoVet Referrals, we are dedicated to providing advanced surgical treatments such as pericardiectomy to improve your pet's health. This guide will explain the procedure, why it may be necessary, how to prepare, and what to expect during and after surgery. If you have any questions, our team is here to assist.

What is a Laparoscopic Pericardiectomy?

Pericardiectomy is a surgical procedure in which part or all of the pericardium, the membrane surrounding the heart, is removed.

This procedure is typically performed when there is an accumulation of fluid or thickening of the pericardium, which can restrict the heart's ability to function properly.

The removal of the pericardium allows the heart to expand more freely and improves its function.

Indications for Laparoscopic Pericardiectomy?

A pericardiectomy may be recommended for conditions such as:

- **Pericardial Effusion:** The buildup of fluid in the pericardium, which can impair heart function and lead to symptoms such as lethargy, difficulty breathing, or weakness.
- **Constrictive Pericarditis:** Thickening or scarring of the pericardium, which restricts the heart's ability to expand and contract properly.
- **Tumours or Masses in the Pericardium:** Abnormal growths that affect the heart's ability to function normally.

By removing the pericardium, the pressure on the heart is relieved, which can significantly improve your pet's condition and quality of life.

What are the alternatives?

The primary alternative is managing the condition with medical treatment, such as draining the fluid in the case of pericardial effusion or using medication to reduce inflammation in cases of pericarditis. However, these treatments may only provide temporary relief and may not address the underlying issue. In some cases, surgery is the most effective way to resolve the problem.

What are the risks?

Anaesthetic Risks

- Reactions to sedation or anaesthesia, particularly in pets with pre-existing conditions such as heart, liver, or kidney disease.

Procedure-related Risks

- **Bleeding:** The heart and surrounding tissues are highly vascular, so bleeding may occur, but it is usually controlled during the procedure.
- **Infections or Wound Complications:** Rarely, the surgical site may become infected or irritated.
- **Heart Complications:** As this procedure involves the heart, there is a small risk of complications related to heart rhythm or function, although our team will closely monitor your pet throughout the procedure.

Our experienced team takes every precaution to minimise these risks and ensure a successful outcome.

Laparoscopic Pericardiectomy Procedure

Pre-Operative Consultation

- Pre-clinical examination of your pet.
- Procedure discussion with a senior surgeon.
- For long-distance clients, a clinical examination may be carried out by your local vet and a phone consultation will be arranged with one of our senior surgeons prior to surgery.
- Medical Review: Please inform us of all your pet's medications, including over-the-counter treatments. Certain drugs, like steroids or NSAIDs, may need to be paused, and special instructions apply for pets with conditions like diabetes or heart disease.

1

Admission & Preparation

- Withhold food for 6–12 hours before the procedure.
- Water: Restrict water for 2–4 hours prior to arrival.
- Please make sure your pet has had the opportunity to go to the toilet before arriving at the clinic.
- A team member will review the procedure with you, address any questions, and obtain your consent.
- Your pet will undergo a clinical examination, and any necessary blood tests or imaging (e.g., ultrasound, X-rays, or CT scan) will be performed to assess the condition of the heart and pericardium.
- An intravenous catheter will be placed to administer fluids, anaesthesia, and any necessary medications

2

Laparoscopic Pericardiectomy

- Under general anaesthesia, the pericardium will be carefully accessed through a small incision in the chest.
- The pericardium is then removed or partially removed to relieve pressure on the heart.
- The surgical site will be closed with absorbable sutures or surgical glue.

The procedure typically takes 1–2 hours, depending on the complexity of the case.

3

Recovery & Monitoring

- Your pet will be closely monitored until they recover from anaesthesia.
- A small, bland meal will be offered before discharge.
- Most pets experience minimal discomfort due to the small incisions, and additional pain relief will be provided if needed.

4

Home Recovery

- Keep your pet calm and indoors (or on a lead for dogs) for 24–48 hours after surgery.
- Restrict exercise and vigorous activity for 10–14 days to allow the surgical site to heal.
- Monitor the incision site for any swelling, redness, or discharge.

5

Next Steps & Follow Up

- Most pets recover fully within a few weeks.
- A follow-up appointment will be scheduled to monitor healing, assess heart function, and ensure there are no complications.
- If your pet has had any biopsies or tissue samples taken during the procedure, we will contact you with the results and discuss any necessary next steps.

Further information

When to contact us:

Contact us if you notice:

- Swelling, redness, or discharge at the incision site.
- Vomiting, lethargy, or loss of appetite.
- Difficulty breathing, coughing, or other signs of heart distress.
- Pale gums or other unusual symptoms.

Contact Us

To Refer a routine case, please use the referral form on our website.

Call:
01543 373 033

Email:
Referrals@endovetclinic.co.uk

Our Services

To see our full list of services, visit:
www.veterinaryendoscopy.co.uk

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