



VETEMIS
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Foreign Body Removal

Introduction:

At Vetemis Referrals, we offer interventional endoscopy as a minimally invasive method for removing foreign objects that your pet may have swallowed. This guide will explain the procedure, why it may be necessary, how to prepare, and what to expect during and after treatment. If you have any questions, our team is happy to assist.

What is Intervention Endoscopy - Foreign Body Removal

Interventional endoscopy uses a flexible tube with a camera and specialised instruments to locate and retrieve foreign objects from the upper gastrointestinal (GI) tract. This technique allows our veterinary team to extract the object through the mouth rather than performing open surgery, making it a much safer and less invasive option.

The procedure is performed under general anaesthesia and provides a real-time, high-definition view inside your pet's digestive system. Special retrieval tools, such as grasping forceps, baskets, or loops, are used to carefully remove the foreign body without causing further damage.

Indications for a Foreign Body Removal?

If your pet has swallowed a foreign object, they may display one or more of the following symptoms:

- Gagging, retching, or repeated swallowing.
- Drooling excessively.
- Vomiting or regurgitation.
- Loss of appetite or refusal to eat.
- Restlessness or signs of pain, such as whining or guarding the abdomen.
- Lethargy and weakness.
- Abdominal bloating or discomfort.
- Straining to pass faeces or diarrhoea.

If you notice any of these symptoms, urgent veterinary care is required to prevent serious complications such as obstructions, perforations, or poisoning.

What are the alternatives?

Surgical Removal (Gastrotomy/Enterotomy) – If the object has moved further into the intestines or cannot be retrieved endoscopically, open surgery may be required. This involves making an incision in the stomach or intestines to extract the foreign body. While effective, surgery carries more risks, requires longer recovery, and may result in complications such as infection or delayed healing.

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

- **Incomplete Removal:** If the object cannot be retrieved, surgery may be required.
- **Tissue Irritation or Minor Bleeding:** The foreign object or endoscopic tools may cause temporary irritation.
- **Perforation (Rare):** In rare cases, sharp objects may cause damage to the digestive tract.

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

Foreign Body Removal 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, answer any questions, and obtain your consent.
- Your pet will undergo a clinical examination, and blood tests or imaging (e.g., ultrasound or CT scan) may be performed to assess the spleen and confirm the diagnosis.
- An intravenous catheter will be placed to administer fluids, anaesthesia, and medications if needed.

2

Foreign Body Removal

- Under general anaesthesia, an endoscopic camera is inserted through the mouth and guided into the stomach or intestines to locate the foreign object. Air may be introduced to improve visibility, and specialised instruments—such as grasping forceps or retrieval baskets—are used to carefully remove the object through the oesophagus. If the object is too large or difficult to retrieve, it may need to be repositioned or broken down.
- Throughout the procedure, your pet's vital signs are closely monitored to ensure safety. Once the foreign body is removed, the digestive tract is examined for any damage.

The procedure typically takes 30–60 minutes, 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

- Rest & Activity Restriction: Keep your pet calm and limit activity for 24–48 hours.
- Feeding: Provide small, soft meals for the first 24 hours to allow the digestive system to recover.
- Monitoring: Watch for signs of discomfort, vomiting, or changes in behaviour.

5

Next Steps & Follow Up

- Most pets recover quickly after interventional endoscopy, but a follow-up appointment may be recommended to ensure healing. If the foreign body caused irritation or trauma, additional medications (e.g., gastroprotectants, antibiotics) may be prescribed.
- If biopsies were taken during the procedure, results will typically be available within a few days, and our team will discuss any further treatment if needed.

Further information

When to contact us:

Contact us immediately if you notice:

- Vomiting, lethargy, or loss of appetite.
- Signs of pain or discomfort.
- Difficulty swallowing, breathing, or persistent coughing.
- Abdominal swelling, bloating, or distress.

Contact Us

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

Call:
01543 373 033

Email:
Referrals@vetemis.co.uk

Our Services

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

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