



Reconstructive and Skin Surgery

For a variety of reasons our pets may end up with a large wound or skin defect, whether secondary to trauma or after removal of a large tumor. Each defect must be carefully evaluated so that a treatment plan can be tailored to each individual pet and wound. Traumatic injuries typically require days to weeks of wound care, including wound debridement (the medical removal of dead or infected tissue) and bandaging prior to closure. Before removing a large tumor skin-stretching techniques can be used to facilitate primary closure at the time of surgery.

An important consideration in evaluating any wound to be closed is location. Over the neck, back, and trunk dogs have excess skin which can be easily mobilized to facilitate wound closure. Along the extremities there is little excess skin and the skin is difficult to mobilize necessitating alternative techniques for closure.

One technique used frequently to close large defects is called a pedicle flap. Pedicle flaps are "flaps" of epidermis and dermis (the superficial and deep layers of skin), which are partially lifted from a donor site and pulled or moved to cover a skin defect. The base of the flap remains connected to the donor site and provides the blood supply necessary for healing. Another technique available for wound closure is a skin graft. Skin grafts are complete transfer of a section of the epidermis and dermis to a distant recipient site (no connection remains between the donor site and recipient site). Skin grafts are typically used to cover defects where no skin flap is available for use (such as a limb or large trunk defect). Careful planning before surgery is required for the successful outcome of flap and graft techniques.

At Aspen Meadow Veterinary Specialists we will evaluate your pet's specific needs, discuss options, and create a custom treatment plan.