

Sialocele (Salivary mucocele)

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Overview: A sialocele, or salivary mucocele, is a collection of saliva between tissues that results from rupture of a salivary gland or duct. Although saliva can collect in a number of locations depending on the gland or duct that is damaged, the most common type of mucocele is referred to as cervical mucocele, which results in saliva collecting under the chin or under the tongue.

Signs/symptoms: Most commonly, your pet will not experience any problems associated with a mucocele. He/she will develop a soft, fluid filled area that is usually not painful. It rarely interferes with function. Some of the more rare mucoceles, like a pharyngeal mucocele, can develop in the back of the throat and can cause respiratory distress.

Diagnosis: Mucoceles are most commonly diagnosed on physical exam and obtaining an aspirate of the fluid within the swelling to confirm that it is saliva.

Treatment: Treatment for salivary mucoceles is to remove the salivary glands that are the source of saliva that is leaking into the tissues. For cervical mucoceles, this includes removal of the paired mandibular and sublingual salivary glands on the affected side. Often a drain is placed in the swelling for 2-4 days after surgery to allow saliva and inflammatory fluid to be evacuated.

Rannulas, or fluid accumulation under the tongue, are treated by marsupializing the swelling. This involves creating a new opening so any new fluid will drain directly into the mouth.

Aftercare/outcome: Dogs do well with sialocele removal. If present, the drain will need to be removed 2-4 days postoperatively. The area around the drain site will need to be cleaned. Dogs do not experience a dry mouth after surgery, even if the glands on both sides need to be removed.

Please refer to the American College of Veterinary Surgeons website

www.acvs.org for additional information or call Dr. Boswell at 269-312-4227