

EAR CROP PROTOCOL

1. **Call** and make a consult appointment at the proper age (per the chart below).
2. **When you make an appointment** we require a refundable deposit, refunded if you cancel within 48 hours of the surgery. A surgical “no show” is very costly—we have scheduled two technicians and a veterinarian for 1-½ hours. Deposits are applied to the cost of surgery.
3. **The consult** may be on the same day as the surgery. A complete health exam is performed and preventive care, such as vaccines and parasite checks, is documented. We ask that you not feed or water your pet after 9:00 pm the night prior, to minimize the chances that your pet will vomit when being induced or recovering from anesthesia.
4. **If your pet is healthy,** we discuss the length and shape of ear crop that you expect. We check for size, length, thickness, and lift of the ear, and determine if it is reasonable to put a particular crop on your dog. We attempt to anticipate and prevent problems ahead of time, whenever possible.
5. **We hospitalize your pet for surgery,** planning to send your dog home in the late afternoon. A pre-surgery blood panel is performed to rule out any congenital or health problem that may interfere with anesthesia. Occasionally, we find infection or anemia in the CBC, and congenital kidney or liver conditions may be detected on the chemistry panel.
6. **If all is normal** on the physical, blood work, and ear assessment for the desired procedure, we will install an intravenous catheter for fluid administration, providing intravenous access as needed during the surgery. This procedure requires about 1-½ hours of anesthesia from start to finish. This is a long time for young animals, so fluids are an important support for the cardiovascular system. Pre-anesthetic drugs are given to control salivation, drooling, and the urge to vomit, as well as to control pain and smooth the recovery from the anesthetic.
7. **The ear crop surgery** takes about one hour, with a fifteen minute clip and surgical preparation and another fifteen minutes in recovery. A cup-type support rack is placed on the head, to which the ears are taped to prevent movement during the first 2 weeks of healing. During surgery, monitors are in constantly measuring heart rate, ECG, blood oxygen, respiration rate, CO2 level, and body temperature. Bleeding is controlled with electrocautery.
8. **In recovery,** a licensed RVT monitors the patient until extubation of the endotracheal breathing tube and the patient has become conscious. We keep surgical patients hospitalized for several hours to make sure they are comfortable, not bothering their sutures and ear racks, and they are able to walk well. Pain medications are administered as needed.
9. **Release from the hospital** is typically late in the day by Dr. Frace with the assistance of the RVT. You will be shown how to administer powder to the ear edges and apply and remove the sock cover over the rack and head. Written instructions

are sent home outlining feeding, exercise, cautions, dos and don'ts, what to do if rack is loose or ears bleed, and follow-up appointments.

10. **Medications will be sent home with the patient**, typically a powder for the ear edges the first week, ointment for the cut edges the second week, and pain medications. Some pets may need an E-collar and tranquilizers.
11. **We recheck** and adjust the ear rack in 7 days and switch to ointment for the second week. In 14 days, we recheck the ears, remove the sutures, clean the ears, and, in most breeds, install ear cones.
12. **Ear cones** stay in for 12 days and are removed by the owner at home. You will then need to bathe your dog, clean the ears, and let them rest for 2 days. In the 2 days of ear rest, return to the office for evaluation of the ears, and, in most cases, have a second set of ear cones installed. Coning of the ear helps support the base of the ear as it "leathers" and becomes rigid. This takes two to eight conings, depending on the breed. Bully breed types are less, and Great Danes are the longest.

NOTE: Posterior ear taping is instituted after the conings have created a rigid base that lifts the bottom half of the ear, but doesn't allow the ear to break over the top of the head. Posterior taping is applied to the top middle third of the ear to keep the ear from lying laterally ("flying nun" look from the front). This is a lightweight way of stiffing the edge of the ear with two to three layers of tape on the outer edge, but still allows the ear to lie down and stand up pricked. This gives the auricular muscle some exercise to strengthen and support the ear in the pricked upright position. Posterior taping is a "12 days up, 2 days down" process, with recheck evaluations every 2 weeks until the ears are standing properly.

IDEAL AGE FOR EAR CROPPING OF VARIOUS BREEDS					
BREED	AGE	BREED	AGE	BREED	AGE
Affenpincher	12 weeks	Brussels Griffon	16 weeks	Miniature Schnauzer	16 weeks
Argentine Dogo	7 weeks	Cane Corso	9 weeks	Neapolitan Mastiff	7 weeks
Beaucerons	9 weeks	Doberman	9 weeks	Perro de Presa	9 weeks
Boston Terrier	16 weeks	German Pinscher	10 weeks	Pit Bull Terrier	9 weeks
Bouvier des Flanders	7 weeks	Giant Schnauzer	7 weeks	Staffordshire Terrier	9 weeks
Boxer	9 weeks	Great Dane	7 weeks	Manchester Terrier	9 weeks
Briard	9 weeks	Miniature Pinscher	16-20 weeks	Standard Schnauzer	9 weeks