

Total Ear Canal Ablation (TECA)

What is the ear canal?

The ear is composed of the outer flap (the pinna), the canal leading to the ear drum, the middle ear (the bulla) and the inner ear (including the tiny bones of the ear and the balance control).

Why perform a TECA?

TECA is often performed following failed medical treatment of ear disease. Most commonly, we recommend a consultation with our onsite dermatologist first to see if the ear can be saved. TECA is a salvage procedure, meaning that removal of the entire canal cannot be undone, and will result in deafness in that ear.

Investigation and surgery

A member of our surgical team will discuss your pet's history and symptoms to decide a tailor-made diagnostic plan. This will include a full physical examination, including an ear examination (which is sometimes easier once your pet is asleep), and often includes a CT-scan or an MRI of the head. This will determine the level of disease and which surgery may be most appropriate. Surgery is typically performed the day after diagnostics, so that a complete plan can be made. The flap of the ear is not removed, but the ear canal is removed in its entirety, including the ear drum, and the lining of the middle ear.

Why have I been referred?

TECA is complex surgery, which should be performed once other options have been exhausted. Thorough knowledge of the complex anatomy of the head is needed to avoid surgical complications. Advanced diagnostic facilities aid in identifying the underlying cause, which can affect surgical planning purposes. The surgery is performed by one of our experienced surgeons, who will explain the pros and cons of each option. The surgery itself would be a very painful procedure, if it were not for our modern and up to date anaesthesia and analgesia practices. Your pet would be hospitalised overnight for individually tailored pain management, and our hospital is staffed 24h per day with vets and nurses, who can assist your pet's recovery from surgery and anaesthesia.

Prognosis

Most dogs do very well after TECA and clients often report a significant improvement in their pet's quality of life. Unfortunately, the surgery does come with some risk of complications, including damage to the facial nerve (as it runs very close to the ear canal) resulting in reduced ability to blink, balance problems and there is a potential for latent infection.