Rectal Prolapse in Pets

Overview

Rectal prolapse occurs when the rectum, which is the final section of the large intestine, protrudes through the anus. This condition can be either partial or total, depending on the extent of tissue involved. It is typically the result of excessive straining during defecation or urination, often due to underlying gastrointestinal or urogenital disease.

Diagnosis

- Physical Examination: The vet will observe the protrusion and determine whether it is partial or total.
- Differentiation from Intussusception: A probe is used to check if it can pass between the prolapsed tissue and anus, which helps differentiate it from intussusception.

Key facts

- Partial Prolapse: Involves only the anal mucosa protruding from the anus.
- Total Prolapse: Involves all layers of the rectal wall protruding from the anus.
  - Common Causes:
    - -Gastrointestinal issues such as inflammation of different parts of the large intestine (colitis, typhlitis, or proctitis).
    - -Urogenital diseases including cystitis (bladder inflammation), prostatic disease (inflammation or infections), or urolithiasis (bladder stones).
    - -Perineal hernia.
    - -Parasites.
    - -Tumours in the colon, rectum, or anus (rare).
- Diagnosis: A key diagnostic difference between rectal prolapse and intussusception (telescoping of the intestine) is that with rectal prolapse, an instrument cannot pass between the prolapsed tissue and the anus, whereas it can with intussusception.

Treatment Options

The treatment approach depends on the condition of the prolapsed tissue:

- Good Tissue Viability:
  - -If the prolapsed tissue is healthy and can be manually reduced (pushed back), the vet will perform a manual reduction and place a purse-string suture (stitches on the anus) to prevent recurrence.
  - -The suture remains in place for 3-5 days while the underlying cause is treated. During this time, pets are -ften fed a low-residue diet and given laxatives like lactulose to minimize straining.
- Poor Tissue Viability (Traumatized, Devitalized, or Cannot Be Reduced):
  - -If the tissue is damaged or non-viable, a rectal resection and anastomosis may be required.
  - -This involves removing the damaged tissue before suturing the healthy ends together.
- Recurrent Prolapse:
  - -For cases of repeated prolapse, a colopexy may be performed, which involves surgically attaching the colon to the abdominal wall to prevent movement and future prolapses. This is a more invasive surgery that rarely is required and is performed from inside the abdomen.

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Appearance and Symptoms

- Partial Prolapse: The anal mucosa appears as a moist, red protrusion from the anus.
- Total Prolapse: All layers of the rectum are visibly protruding, with a larger, more swollen appearance.
- Associated Symptoms:
  - -Straining to defecate or urinate (tenesmus).
  - -Blood or mucus in stools.
  - -Pain or discomfort when defecating.
  - -Visible swelling or protrusion from the anus.

Complications and Recovery

- Complications: Complications from rectal prolapse treatment can include infection, dehiscence (wound breakdown), or recurrence of the prolapse. In cases where the prolapsed tissue is damaged, there is a risk of necrosis (tissue death) if the condition is left untreated, leading to further surgical intervention. Pets may also experience post-surgical discomfort or straining.
- Recovery: Recovery from rectal prolapse surgery depends on the extent of the prolapse and the underlying cause. With proper care, including a low-residue diet and the use of laxatives, most pets recover well after surgery. Follow-up visits are essential to monitor healing and adjust treatment if needed. In cases of successful reduction with purse-string sutures, recovery is generally quicker, while pets undergoing more invasive procedures like colopexy may need extended recovery time.

Prognosis

- Good Tissue Viability: With prompt treatment and the appropriate diet and medications, most pets recover well.
- Poor Tissue Viability or Recurrence: Pets with more severe prolapses or recurrent issues may require more intensive surgery, with varying outcomes depending on the underlying cause and response to treatment.

Aftercare and Monitoring

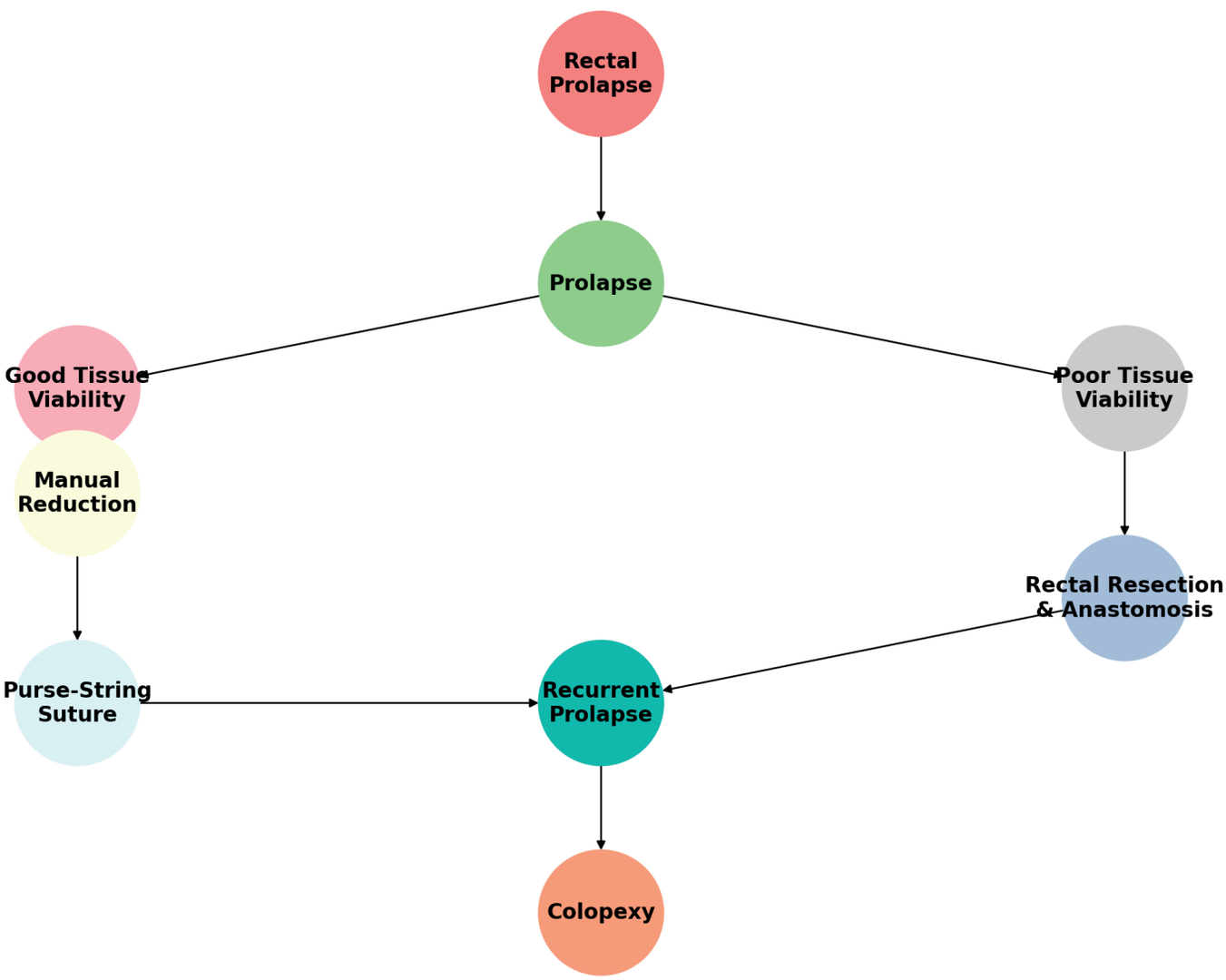
- Diet: A low-residue diet helps minimize stool volume and ease bowel movements during recovery.
- Medications: Laxatives (e.g., lactulose) are prescribed to reduce straining.
- Follow-up Visits: Regular veterinary check-ups are needed to monitor healing, ensure the prolapse has not recurred, and address the underlying condition.

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Rectal Prolapse in Pets - Final Flowchart with Larger Nodes and Text



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