

# Paraphimosis in Dogs

Russell W. Fugazzi, DVM

## BASIC INFORMATION

### Description

Paraphimosis is a condition in which the penis protrudes from the prepuce (sheath around the penis) and does not return to its normal position.

### Causes

Paraphimosis can occur for many reasons in any dog, such as the following:

- German shepherd dogs and golden retrievers have a possibly inherited condition in which the opening of the prepuce is narrow or the sheath is shorter than normal, and the penis can become trapped outside the prepuce.
- The condition occurs most often when hair becomes wrapped around the base of the penis while an erection is occurring. The hair forms a ring that entraps the penis, prevents it from returning to a normal position, and can actually strangulate the penis.
- Trauma to the penis and infection or foreign bodies in the penis and prepuce may cause paraphimosis.
- Neurologic problems that allow the penis to hang out of the prepuce, such as paralysis involving the rear legs, may be a cause.
- Tumors (often cancer) of the penis and prepuce may be contributing factors.

### Clinical Signs

Signs typically develop quickly. Initially, insistent licking of the genital area or the penis may be the only sign. After several hours, the penis may become terribly swollen and turn purple or black. This swelling can be very painful and often prevents normal urination.

### Diagnostic Tests

Diagnosis is usually made by careful physical examination. The condition usually causes no direct changes in laboratory tests, although some testing may be recommended if an infection or cancer is suspected.

## TREATMENT AND FOLLOW-UP

### Treatment Options

Paraphimosis is considered an emergency. The immediate goal is to relocate the penis to its normal position within the prepuce. Your veterinarian may insert a urinary catheter into the penis and urethra if there is concern that the urinary tract is obstructed. Antibiotics may be recommended if an infection is present. Other therapy may involve the following:

- Lubrication of the penis with topically applied jellies or salves
- Application of special solutions to try and shrink the swelling
- Removal of foreign bodies, including matted or tangled hair rings
- Removal of any tumors present
- Surgical enlargement of the opening of the prepuce and manual replacement of the penis
- Surgical amputation of the penis if the penis is so severely affected that it is no longer healthy or if the prepuce is too short to cover the entire penis

### Follow-up Care

Once the penis is returned to its normal position, the dog is usually isolated from any source of stimulation, such as female dogs in heat or excitable activities. The dog is also monitored constantly to make sure it can urinate normally. If surgery was done, postoperative medications may be prescribed, and rechecks are scheduled to evaluate the surgical site and remove the sutures. Notify your veterinarian if any signs recur, especially if the condition is associated with congenital problems of the penis and prepuce or is neurologic in origin.

### Prognosis

Most affected dogs have a very poor prognosis for returning to normal breeding function. With early, successful medical or surgical management, prognosis for a comfortable life is fair to good in most cases.