



Some surgeries can be performed in a minimally invasive fashion. Instead of using a single long incision, the surgeon makes several short incisions and does surgery with a small camera and special instruments. Minimally invasive surgery of the abdomen is called “laparoscopy.” Minimally invasive surgery of the chest is called “thoracoscopy.”

The primary advantage of minimally invasive over traditional open surgery is decreased postoperative pain, generally requiring less pain medication and providing your pet with a more rapid return to normal attitude and appetite. Minimally invasive surgery is not necessarily quicker than traditional open surgery. Also, postoperative activity restrictions still apply.

Laparoscopic procedures that may be performed in the abdomen include spay, retained testicle removal, exploration, biopsies, and preventative gastropexy (tacking the stomach to the body wall to prevent GDV). Thoracoscopic procedures that may be performed in the chest include exploration, biopsies, thoracic duct ligation (to prevent the accumulation of lymph fluid in the chest), and pericardiectomy (removal of a portion of the heart’s covering to prevent accumulation of blood or fluid).

Minimally invasive surgery is not for every patient or procedure, but it is a great option for certain situations. Please ask your surgeon if laparoscopy or thoracoscopy is appropriate for your pet.



Above: Exploratory laparoscopy in progress

Above right: Laparoscopic view of a normal liver

Below right: Thoracoscopic view of the heart following pericardiectomy

