Post operative care and possible complications

Post-operative management

Anti-inflammatory medications are administered post-operatively to reduce swelling around the incision. Antibiotics are usually administered prior to and following surgery to protect against bacterial infection of the operation site. The skin is held together immediately postoperatively using skin staples. These will usually be removed approximately 14 days after the surgery is performed.

Following surgery, all food and water should be fed from a height for at least three weeks, and the horse should not be turned out to grass. Allowing the horse to lower its head results in stretching of the permanent suture material and may contribute to failure of the surgical procedure. Trotting exercise can begin following staple removal, however canter work should not recommence for approximately four weeks after the surgery

Post-operative complications

* Wound infection - presents as heat, swelling and discharge at the wound site, treated with flushing and antibiotics.
* Infection of the implant sutures - wound infections can spread to involve the sutures used to fix the larynx and can be difficult to treat, sometimes necessitating removal of the surgical implant sutures.
* Surgical failure - if the tension in the sutures holding the larynx is not correct it may not prevent the DDSP. Early turn out may contribute to this. On occasion, the horse may be noted to make a louder respiratory noise at exercise than that noticed prior to surgery, this should resolve with increased fitness levels.