

Debarking

(ventriculocordectomy)

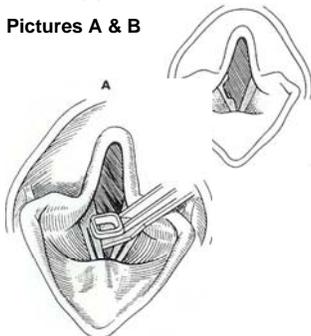
General Information

The barking dog presents a serious and annoying problem in crowded urban or suburban areas, or kennels. When all attempts to break this habit fail, then surgical removal of the vocal cords may be necessary. The procedure is humane and should be considered no more radical than spay or neuter. No known adverse psychological effects accompany debarking since dogs do not have a concept of the volume of their bark.

Debarking surgery does not produce total voice loss. After surgery, the animal can still produce a raspy noise that might still be irritating to persons near the pet, though it is quieter than barking. In general, there is a 30-80% reduction in volume. Realistic expectations are needed for this procedure, as some are more effective than others.

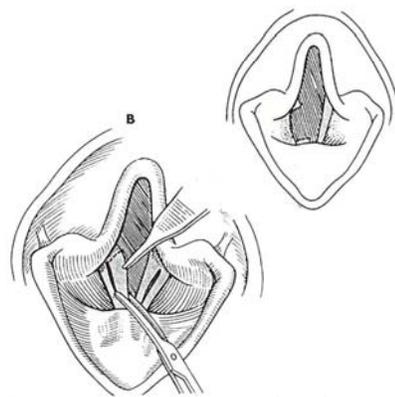
Oral Approach

Pictures A & B



In some cases the dog's ability to bark gradually returns. This is due to scar tissue forming in the voice box across the bottom. This gradual return may occur as quickly as a few months or as long as 3-5 years. A repeated surgery may enhance the initial procedure somewhat, it does not mean the procedure was not performed correctly.

Devocalization or ventriculocordectomy may be performed through the mouth or by an incision made over the larynx or voice box. The choice is left to the surgeon. A surgical radio frequency unit may be used to debark your dog, which is rapidly replacing laser. This technology provides the safest cleanest cut while minimizing any chance for bleeding. Enough tissue is removed from the vocal cords to disrupt normal function and prevent loud barking. A harsh cough will typically follow the surgery for 1-2 weeks.



B. Vocalcordectomy

The most effective debarking procedure involves doing only one side at a time, allowing it to heal fully, then repeating the procedure on the other side. The drawbacks to this method are cost, and two anesthetic episodes.

After Care

- 1. General Measures:** Excitement should be reduced to a minimum for 3 weeks after the procedure. If your pet continues to bark, then other measures may be necessary.
- 2. Diet:** Do not feed your pet extremely hot or extremely cold foods for the first week after surgery, but an altered diet is not necessary.
- 3. Activity:** Your pet should not be kept tied with a collar for the first 2 weeks after surgery. If it is necessary to tie your pet, then use a harness.

Notify the Doctor if any of the Following Occur:

1. Your pet refuses to eat, or swallows with difficulty.
2. Your pet has blood in the saliva or drools excessively.
3. Your pet has trouble breathing.