

# Emergency Care: Suggested Analgesic & Anesthetic Protocols for Cats

Catherine Sabino, DVM; Ainsley Boudreau, DVM; & Karol A. Mathews, DVM, DVSc, Diplomate ACVECC  
Ontario Veterinary College, University of Guelph

**Stable patients:** Normal mentation, well hydrated, normal vital measures

**Obtunded patients:** Mild dehydration, mild depression, normal vital parameters

**Nonstable patients:** Patients with electrolyte abnormalities requiring stabilization prior to anesthesia

<i>Analgnesia &amp; Premedication</i>		Stable Patients	Obtunded Patients	Nonstable Patients
Hydromorphone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 0.025–0.1 mg/kg IV</li> <li>• Can be administered in incremental doses of 0.01 mg/kg</li> </ul>	Yes	0.01–0.025 mg/kg IV	0.01–0.05 mg/kg IV
Butorphanol	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 0.1–0.3 mg/kg IV</li> </ul>	Yes	Yes	Yes
Buprenorphine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 0.005–0.02 mg/kg IV</li> <li>• Can be administered in incremental doses of 0.005 mg/kg</li> <li>• Requires 30 min to effect</li> </ul>	Yes	Yes	Yes
Methadone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 0.05–0.1 mg/kg IV</li> <li>• Administer in incremental doses of 0.01 mg/kg</li> </ul>	Yes	No	No
<i>Further Sedation &amp; Muscle Relaxation</i>				
Diazepam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 0.25–0.5 mg/kg IV</li> </ul>	Yes	Yes	Yes
Midazolam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 0.2–0.5 mg/kg IV</li> </ul>	Yes	Yes	Yes
<i>Additional Sedation</i>				
Acepromazine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 0.01–0.03 mg/kg IV</li> </ul>	Yes	No	No
<i>Anesthesia Induction</i>				
Diazepam & ketamine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diazepam (0.5 mg/kg IV) &amp; ketamine (5–10 mg/kg IV)</li> <li>• Titrate slowly to effect</li> <li>• Do not use if history of heart disease, auscultable heart murmur, or arrhythmia</li> </ul>	Yes	Yes	No
Diazepam & ketamine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ketamine/diazepam titration (1:1 mixture) at 0.02-mL increments</li> <li>• Considered very safe for cats with cardiac abnormalities</li> </ul>	Yes	No	No
Propofol	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2–4 mg/kg IV</li> <li>• Doses administered at 25% of calculated dose every 30 sec to effect</li> </ul>	Yes	Yes	No

## Other adjunctive methods of analgesia:

- **Epidural anesthesia:** Appropriate for all patients without a contraindication to epidural anesthesia; should be performed by clinicians with experience
- **Nonsteroidal antiinflammatory drugs (NSAIDs):** Appropriate only in patients without a contraindication for NSAID administration; in our experience, meloxicam (0.05–0.1 mg/kg once or twice) is beneficial in reducing inflammation and dysinergia post obstruction