



MECHANICSVILLE ANIMAL HOSPITAL

Surgery Frequently Asked Questions

Your Pet has an upcoming surgical procedure!

Here is some information regarding what to expect prior, during, and post-surgery.

Pre-Surgery

- On the day of the procedure, please drop your pet off between 7:30 am – 8:30 am. It is essential to have your pet here between these drop-off times to do a pre-surgical exam, pre-surgical blood tests and prepare your pet's tailored anesthetic protocol. Unless otherwise told, please make sure your pet does not eat anything after 11:00 pm the night prior or the morning of your pet's surgical procedure. You may leave water out for your pet to drink.
- When arriving at our practice, a client service representative will have your anesthesia consent form and estimate to review and sign. Please inform our staff of other services your pet may need, such as: anal gland expression, paw pad trimming, vaccines, or heartworm prevention. Please leave a phone number on the consent form where we can reach you throughout the day. If you have additional questions, we will gladly take you to an exam room where you and an assistant/technician can discuss them.
- Our doctors consider many factors in the order in which the doctor will do the procedures. It is not based on arrival time, rather than the type of procedure, the pet's pre-existing conditions, and their contentment level while staying with us.

During the Procedure

- Your pet will receive a pre-surgical exam and pre-op services like placement of an intravenous catheter and tailored pre-surgical medications, including pain medication for pain management and sedatives for anxiety/stress. The intravenous catheter gives our team instant vein access should an anesthetic emergency arise and fluids to maintain blood pressure.
- It is now time for your pet's procedure! Our team is monitoring your pet's heart rate and respiratory rate, as well as oxygenation status and blood pressure. Once the surgical procedure is complete, your pet is in recovery until he/she becomes alert and responsive. This will be when you receive a phone call to let you know your pet is awake and that the surgery went well. We will give you a time to come pick up and meet with a technician to go over discharge instructions, medications and answer any questions.

What to Expect After Your Pet's Procedure?

While all the information provided below can be expected, if you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact us at (804) 559-9800

Is it normal for my pet to seem this sleepy?

Answer: Sedation or general anesthesia can make your pet more sleepy than usual. These drugs can take several hours to leave an animal's system, making them sleepier for a day or two.

When my pet comes home, is there anything I should do differently?

Answer: A quiet, warm, and comfortable place to recover is the best. Ensure your pet has a clean bed or blanket and avoid stairs or jumping up/down onto furniture.

When can I feed my pet?

Answer: Sedation or anesthesia can sometimes cause stomach upset; for this reason, we recommend ½ of their regular meal to our post-op patients when they arrive home. As long as they do not vomit, you can feed the second ½ of their meal approximately an hour later if they seem hungry.

Water typically does not need to be restricted as long as your pet does not try to drink a large volume at one time, as this may make them vomit.

Please check your discharge paperwork; if any recommendations are different from the above, the technician will go over these at the time of discharge.

What about medications to go home?

Answer: Your pet will likely have medications that will need to go home after their surgery. The technician will go over the medication instructions, and any side effects at the time of discharge. Please make sure you read the labels carefully, and if you are having trouble giving the medicine, please contact us at 804-559-9800. Please do not give your pet any medication intended for human use unless instructed by our veterinarian.

How long before the sutures/stitches or staples need to come out?

Answer: Depending on the type of sutures used during the procedure, some may dissolve on their own while others will not dissolve. Your assistant/technician will let you know what kind of sutures were used at the surgical discharge appointment. The non-dissolvable sutures will require a 10- 14-day non-invasive follow-up at NO CHARGE to be removed.

Why are there shaved areas on my pet?

Answer: Most surgical sites require shaving/disinfecting the area. However, some areas are larger than others. If you see any shaved areas on the legs, this is where the IV catheter was placed.

What does a normal incision look like?

Answer: There is some variability on how an incision looks. There may be some darker spots directly at the incision which could be bruising or skin glue. During the healing process a small amount of redness and scabbing may occur.

Some incisions may have a small lump due to a suture knot or mild suture reaction. This can be normal. Please make sure you check your pet's incision daily.

If your pet has a large amount of redness, swelling, pulling apart of the edges of the incision, a large lump, or any leakage that you were not told about at the time of discharge, you should call us at (804) 559-6502.

My pet has started licking/chewing at its incision; what should I do?

An e-collar can prevent licking/chewing at the incision site for most procedures. Your pet may show displeasure with wearing it at first but will get used to it and learn to navigate their environment. If your pet needs an e-collar, please contact Mechanicsville Animal Hospital. For some procedures, the best option may be a t-shirt or sock. There are unique recommendations other than an e-collar that may be better, which the technician will discuss at the discharge time.

My pet came home with a little cough.

Answer: It can be normal if you hear a little cough after your pet's procedure. Under general anesthesia, the endotracheal tube is placed to administer the anesthesia and oxygen, which can cause a minor irritation. This should subside in a couple of days, but if the cough does get worse, please call us at 804-559-9800.

When can normal activities be resumed?

Answer: Depending on the type of procedure determines when your pet is allowed for normal activities. Dental's with no extractions can resume activity the next day. For routine procedures that require sutures, recovery is important, and activities need to be limited for 10-14 days. For extensive and orthopedic procedures, the recovery time could be longer. The assistant/technician will go over the recovery period during the time of discharge.

It is vital to limit your pet's activity as instructed to avoid damaging the external or internal incisions, causing fluid accumulation/swelling, and or damaging the hardware placed during orthopedic procedures. Also, avoid any water activities, including swimming or bathing, as these can cause moisture, which can introduce bacteria into the incision, leading to infection.