



## Surgery Frequently Asked Questions

If you have received this form, your Pet has been scheduled for a surgical procedure. Here is some information regarding what to expect prior to, during, and post-surgery.

### Pre-Surgery

- On the day of the procedure, please drop your pet off between 7:30am – 8:30am. It is essential to have your pet here during these drop-off times to do a pre-surgical exam, run pre-surgical blood tests if necessary, and prepare your pet's tailored anesthetic protocol. Unless otherwise told, please make sure your pet does not eat anything after midnight the night before. You may leave water out for your pet to drink.
- When you arrive, a client service representative will take you to an exam room where an assistant or technician will discuss the procedure, the costs associated with the procedure and any other questions you may have. You will be asked to fill out anesthetic consent forms, including a phone number where you can be reached throughout the day and any optional services you would like performed while your pet is here for surgery.
- Then you will leave your pet in our care for the day. Once the surgery doctor is done with their morning appointments, they will begin surgical procedures. The order in which the doctor will do the procedures is not based on arrival time. Many factors are considered including the type of procedure being performed, the pet's pre-existing conditions, and their level of contentment while staying with us.

### During the Procedure

- After our pre-surgical exam and completion of other pre-op services, your pet will receive tailored pre-surgical medications. These are typically a combination of pain medications and sedatives. These help to get the pain medication in their system and working before they ever actually endure the pain, thus helping to better control the pain. The sedatives help to lower any stress and anxiety.
- Your pet will then have an intravenous catheter placed in order to provide fluids, maintain blood pressure, and give us instant vein access, should an anesthetic emergency arise.

- They will then be placed under general anesthesia where they will have a dedicated person monitoring your pet's heart rate, respiratory rate, oxygenation status, and blood pressure.
- The procedure will be performed and once your pet is alert and responsive in recovery, an assistant, technician, or doctor will call you to give you any updates regarding the procedure, let you know your pet is doing well, and a good time to for you to pick up your pet. When you come to take your pet home, an assistant or technician will go over all discharge instructions, medications, and answer any questions you may have.

### **What to Expect After Your Pet's Procedure**

While all the information provided below can be normal, if you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact us at (804) 559-6502.

#### **1. Is it normal for my pet to seem this sleepy?**

Yes. Your pet was given sedation and/or general anesthesia. These drugs can take several hours to fully leave your pet's system and may make them feel sleepier for a day or so.

#### **2. When my pet comes home, is there anything I should do differently?**

Please make sure your pet has a quiet, warm, and comfortable place to recover such as a clean bed or blanket. Have your pet avoid stairs and jumping on furniture.

#### **3. When can I feed my pet?**

Sedation and/or anesthesia can sometimes cause stomach upset. For this reason, we recommend post-op patients to be fed  $\frac{1}{2}$  of their normal meal when they get home. As long as they do not have vomit, you can feed the other  $\frac{1}{2}$  of their normal meal approximately an hour from the first feeding, if they still seem hungry.

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

If there are any recommendations regarding feeding different from above, the technician will go over these at the time of discharge so please check your discharge paperwork.

#### **4. What about medications to go home?**

Most patients will have medications to go home after surgery. The technician will have gone over the medications and instructions at the time of discharge, but PLEASE make sure you read the labels carefully. If you are having any trouble medicating your pet, please contact us at (804)559-6502. DO NOT give your pet any medications intended for human use unless instructed by our veterinarian.

#### **5. How long before the sutures (stitches) need to come out?**

This will depend on the sutures used during the procedure. Some procedures allow for the use of sutures that are under the skin and will dissolve on their own. Others will not dissolve and you will have to bring your pet in for a doctor or technician to remove them. Typical suture time is 10 – 14 days, HOWEVER, the technician will go over the suture removal instructions at the time of discharge.

#### **6. Why are there shaved areas on my pet?**

Most surgical procedures require shaving where the surgery is to be performed. Some procedures require a larger area to be shaved than others. If you see any shaved areas on the legs, this is where IV catheter placement was done.

#### **7. What does a normal incision look like?**

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.

## **8. My pet has not had a bowel movement yet?**

It can be normal for your pet to not have a bowel movement for 1 – 3 days. It is very common for the anesthesia used during your pet's procedure to cause slowing of the GI. As long as your pet is eating, drinking, and acting normal otherwise, there is no need to worry. Please call us if your pet experiences diarrhea. This can be normal after surgery as well, but we may be able to give him/her some medications to help alleviate this.

## **9. My pet has started licking/chewing at its incision, what should I do?**

If you were sent home with an e-collar (the cone of shame), please make sure your pet wears it for the duration of the recovery period. Your pet may show displeasure with wearing it at first, but more often than not they will get used to it and navigating their environment with it.

If you were not given an e-collar, then please contact Rutland Animal Hospital to request one.

For some procedures, an e-collar may not be the best option. Some incision sites are better protected with a t-shirt, surgi-suit, or sock. If there are special recommendations other than an e-collar, the technician will go over these at the time of discharge.

## **10. My pet came home with a little cough**

If your pet has a minor cough after general anesthesia, this could be due to the endotracheal tube placed to administer the anesthesia and oxygen. It can be normal and should subside in a couple days. If this cough worsens, please call us at (804)559-6502.

## **11. When can normal activities be resumed?**

This will depend on the procedure. For dentals with no extractions, they can resume activity the next day. For any routine procedures that require sutures (stitches), the typical recovery time is 10 – 14 days. For more extensive procedures or orthopedic procedures, the recovery time could be longer. The technician will go over the recovery period with you at the time of discharge.

During the recovery time, it is important 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, which can lead to infection.