

Surgery Discharge Instructions

Will my pet be in pain?

Your doctor will prescribe oral pain medication for you to give at home for the next few days to help keep your pet comfortable. Your pet may be sore the first night home and possibly over the next few days. While some degree of discomfort is expected, if you are concerned about your pet's behavior, contact your doctor as soon as possible.

What can I expect when I bring my pet home?

You will need to have someone home with your pet tonight. It is normal for your pet to be sleepy, less coordinated, whiny, or drool for 12-24 hours. Your pet should be responsive and able to walk, but will most likely want to sleep.

If your pet has been spayed or neutered, do start reducing the calories and the amount of food you are giving by about 10-20% less to help prevent obesity after sterilization.

Do's and Don't's:

- *Do remove the bandage at either the front or hind limb as soon as you arrive home, IF the bandage is still present.* A bandage was placed once your pet's IV catheter was removed. Failure to remove the bandage can result in swelling of the limb and potentially serious complications.
- *Do wait at least 2 hours after getting home before feeding.* Feed your pet only $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ the normal amount of food and water. This will help prevent your pet from vomiting, since pets may feel nauseous after surgery or anesthesia. Tomorrow you may offer food and water as usual.
- *Do not allow licking/chewing at the incision site.* Your pet should wear an Elizabethan (cone) collar for 14 days, especially at night. Licking or chewing at the incision site can cause infection, delay healing, and even require additional surgery. Repair of the surgical site can be twice as expensive due to the damage caused!

Depending on the location of the incision site, you may also need a doggy T-shirt or onesie to prevent scratching of the sutures or incision with the hind paws.

- *Do not allow running/jumping/long walks.* Some pets may even need to be walked in their yard with a leash to control their activity level. Increased activity can tear internal and external sutures, and can also result in excessive swelling at the incision site or scrotum.
- *Do not allow the incision to get wet or dirty.* This means no baths or swimming for 14 days. Keep your pet indoors if possible.

- *Do watch for the following signs:*
 - Completely unresponsive/inability to stand.
 - Refusal to eat or drink for more than 12 hours.
 - Excessive swelling or bleeding from the incision site or scrotum. Some bruising or some mild weeping of blood is common. Some crusting/scabbing is common, but there should be no foul odor or pus.
 - Pale/white mucous membranes. View the gum tissue inside the mouth several times tonight to overnight to make an assessment.
 - Severe vomiting or diarrhea.
 - It is normal for your pet to not have regular bowel movements for several days after anesthesia. Do monitor to make sure there is no straining to defecate and do keep your pet hydrated by encouraging water intake (or adding water to the food) in order to help prevent constipation.
 - Some dry hacking coughing may occur up to several days after the anesthesia secondary to the intubation. If there is excessive coughing or a soft moist cough, please call us.
 - It is normal for some semi-firm fatty tissue inflammation or fibrous/scar tissue swelling to form underneath the skin at the incision site. The firm swelling/bump should soften and flatten over several weeks. This is seen more commonly in cats after the spay, and will resolve faster if the patient is less active after surgery (no jumping/wrestling/climbing, etc).

IF YOU NOTICE ANY OF THESE ABNORMAL SYMPTOMS, CONTACT YOUR DOCTOR IMMEDIATELY AS THEY CAN BE SIGNS OF SERIOUS POSTOPERATIVE CONCERNS. IF OUR HOSPITAL IS NOT OPEN, CONTACT A VETERINARY EMERGENCY CENTER IMMEDIATELY.