

Post-Anesthesia Home Care Information

Immediate Home Care Following an Anesthetic Procedure:

Your pet may return home sleepy and quiet following the anesthetic procedure. This is not unusual following as it takes time for all the anesthetic medications to wear off. It is often wise to confine them to a small area until they are completely back to normal and do not allow them to roam freely outdoors unsupervised. It is also wise to separate them from other pets and children until they are fully normalized.

Feeding:

You may offer a light meal about two hours after returning home. Ideally, a third to a half of their usual size meal.

Your pet may not have a bowel movement for 1-2 days following the procedure. Anesthesia can slow the GI tract down a bit and they also missed a meal in preparation for the anesthesia. Once they are eating normally and active again, this should normalize.

Post-operative Care if Surgery was Performed:

- Check the surgery site daily. Watch for fluid discharge, redness or swelling or any separation of the skin edges. If excessive licking or chewing occurs, please let us know. An Elizabethan collar may become necessary to protect the incision area. Please call us promptly if you note any of the above conditions.
- Keep your pet quiet and restrict activity and exercise during the initial 7-day healing period. For dogs, this means no running and jumping and allow leash-walking only. For cats, try to keep as quiet as possible, which may require confining to a small area. Try to discourage jumping. The incision typically takes about 7 days to heal and excessive activity during this period can cause the surgery incision to reopen, swell or not heal properly. Some incisions in high-motion areas such as the groin, beneath the forelegs (armpit) and over joints and toes may take longer to heal and be more susceptible to irritation, swelling, bruising, or discharge. Please call for a recheck if you have any concerns about the appearance of the incision area.
- You may apply a cold compress to the incision area for 5-10 minutes every 2-4 hours during the first few days post-op. Use a thin towel or cloth between the ice

and their skin to protect their thin skin from excessive cold. Frozen veggies work well for this if you don't have an ice pack. If you do have an ice pack, you may place it in the refrigerator rather than the freezer so it's softer and easier to apply to the area.

- If your pet has a drain in post-operatively, keep the area clean and apply any topical ointment as instructed. Drains are typically rechecked at 3 and 5 days to evaluate for removal.
- Return for sutures to be removed as instructed.
- If there are no sutures that require removal, you should still check the incision daily.

Protecting Surgical Areas or Wounds:

Protecting the incision area or a wound is sometimes challenging. An Elizabethan collar is usually the most effective. Clear, stiff collars allow them to see and they can still eat and drink in the collar. Softer collars like Comfy Cones® may be comfortable, but they cannot see through them which makes some pets a bit anxious. Softer cones, neck wraps and inner tube style devices are often easier for your pet to circumvent, so monitor closely to check and see if your pet is getting past the protective device. Surgical clothing (body suits, sleeves, socks) will work in some pets and others will sneak right past them (or through them) to lick at their incisions. Their instinct to lick a wound is quite strong, and they can be pretty creative at finding ways to get to their incisions, so check the incision regularly for moisture indicating they are licking the area and look for redness, discharge, missing sutures or skin staples, etc. If the incision is painful or becomes infected, they are even more likely to try to lick it, so close observation is essential.

If you think they may be painful despite their pain medications, please let us know so we can make adjustments to improve their comfort level. Sometimes, restricting activity post-op can be a bit challenging for youngsters or very active pets. Please let us know if you think this is, or may become a problem. We can often provide a gentle medication to slow their activity and make it more manageable without excessive sedation.

Give all pain medications as instructed, even if your pet seems fine. They cannot tell us they have discomfort, so we need to be proactive about controlling any pain they could have after a surgical procedure.

If you have any questions regarding your pet's procedure, feeding or potential discomfort, please do not hesitate to call us (727-785-6524).