



## Post Operative Instructions

Please read and follow the post-operative instructions to lessen your pet's risk of injury or infection. Your pet's care after surgery is extremely important.

### Activity

Following surgery, keep your pet indoors in a warm, quiet room for 24 to 36 hours. Activity must be minimal for ten days after surgery, as running, jumping and wrestling with other pets or children can cause damage to the incision. We recommend keeping your pet away from other animals to discourage playing or grooming which would irritate the incision. It is especially important to keep puppies or kittens away from females. Dogs should be walked on a leash and cats kept strictly indoors. Too much activity can cause swelling in dogs and cats.

### Pain

Pets may experience some discomfort or soreness for 24 to 36 hours following surgery. They may cry, so keeping them warm and quiet will provide them with some comfort. All animals receive a post-operative pain injection that lasts 24 hours. If you purchased pain medication for your pet, do not start until the day after surgery as long as the pet is eating and drinking. If you have any questions, please call or text the clinic immediately at **(361) 236-5604**. This is not a 24/7 line, so it is imperative to leave a message. Texting a picture if you have questions about the incision will save time.

### Urinating and Defecating

Your pet should still be urinating even if it is not eating. It is important to verify that your dog or cat is urinating. If you have more than one cat, you must watch the litter box to assure your cat is urinating. Keeping your cat separate with a litter box will allow you to ensure they are urinating. Anesthesia may cause diarrhea or constipation for a day or two, but if your pet

does not defecate normally within two days, please contact us at **(361) 236-5604**.

## **Eating and Drinking**

You can feed your pet ¼ of the normal meal the evening of surgery. They may not eat, but you can attempt to see if they will. If your pet is not eating by the next morning, try giving your dog some low sodium, no msg chicken broth. For cats, you can give them some cat wet food to see if they will eat.

If you purchased pain medication, do NOT give it if your pet is not eating or if your pet is vomiting. They were given a pain injection today that is good until tomorrow. DO NOT give any human medication to your pet, unless specifically directed by the veterinarian, as most medications are toxic and can possibly be fatal to your pet.

Wait until the patient eats one full meal before giving oral flea/tick or heartworm prevention.

## **Incision**

Check your pet's incision twice daily for swelling, bleeding, discharge, or wound opening. Some of these symptoms are expected and are not cause for alarm, but if it seems excessive, please call the clinic for a recheck at **(361) 236-5604**. It is not uncommon for the incision site to have slight redness, mild swelling, or feel slightly irregular or bumpy while healing. Keep your pet clean and dry for ten days after surgery. Do not wash the incision, as this may introduce infection. Bathing your pet is prohibited for at least 10 days after surgery. Never apply any topical ointments, creams or bandages over the incision as they may cause the sutures to absorb prematurely, causing the incision to open. Band-Aids and bandages cause significant irritation to your pet's skin and can lead to infection and serious complications. Male dogs will sometimes start to swell after their neutering. You can ice the scrotal area for 10 minutes twice a day to minimize swelling. A frozen bag of peas or corn is easier on them than a regular ice pack. If your dog will not tolerate the ice, you can use a cold compress. You can also use a cold compress if there is some bleeding at the

incision for spays. Please remember that if you need to lift your pet, please do not touch the incision. For males, stay away from hind areas. For females, stay away from their abdominal area.

## **Gum Color**

Check your pet's gum color when you arrive home after the surgery. The gum color should be pink, and quickly return to that color after you press on the gum above the large canine tooth with your finger. Repeat this check throughout the evening after surgery. If your pet's gums become pale and do not return to pink color during your check, please call/text the clinic at **(361) 236-5604**.

## **Stitches**

Your pet has buried absorbable stitches, also known as sutures, under their outer layer of skin. There is no need to return for suture removal for most pets. Some pets receive staples in their skin. This will be noted on your paperwork so you are aware to bring the pet back. If your pet has staples, they will need to be removed here at our clinic in 10 days after staple placement. Male cats

## **Tattoo**

A small tattoo has been applied to your pet at the time of surgery. It is generally located near the incision site except in male cats where it is located on the stomach to identify that they have been sterilized.

## **Licking**

Discourage your pet from licking or biting at the incision line. All pets should have an Elizabethan collar (cone) to prevent damage to the incision. The collar should stay on the pet for 7 days. If you purchased a cone from us, it will be held together with gauze.

Sometimes, pets will be able to remove it by pawing at it. The gauze can tighten if the pet paws at it enough. It is imperative that you be able to put 2 fingers underneath the gauze. No pets should be let outside off leash unattended with a cone on due to risk of strangulation. If the cone is not used or instructions not followed, your pet is at risk and if there is an after hour emergency, it will be at your expense. It is important to watch your pet because sometimes they can destroy the cone quickly. We also sell a post operative surgery shirt, which will not be as uncomfortable for your pet. You can also go to Petco or Petsmart and purchase a donut cone which is like a pillow around the neck. Some pets will not eat with their cones on. If you need to remove it for them to eat, please make sure to put it back on immediately. If your pet is very stressed with the cone on, high energy, or has anxiety, you should consider the recovery shirt or the donut cone to decrease their stress level.

## **Fertile**

Male cats and dogs remain fertile for 3-4 weeks after surgery and can still impregnate females. Please keep them confined. If females are in heat or coming into heat at time of surgery they may still show signs of being in heat for the next several weeks. This includes attracting males. We strongly recommend keeping your pets away from other animals after surgery to allow them time to heal. Puppies and kittens should be kept away from females as well to make sure they are not interfering with the healing.