

# Post-Operative Instructions

## What to expect when you get your pet home

Your pet has had major surgery. The surgery requires general anesthesia. The patient is completely asleep and unable to feel or move. Your pet is given an IV anesthetic and then maintained on an inhalant anesthetic (Isoflurane) via an endotracheal tube (tube in the "throat"). This procedure is very safe, but your pet may have a bit of a cough from the tube for a day or two after surgery. If your pet has a cough that lasts more than 48 hours, please contact the clinic. In female dogs and cats, the uterus and ovaries are removed through a small incision in the abdominal wall. Females are unable to get pregnant. In both male dogs and cats, the scrotum is not removed, only the testicles. Removal of the testicles prevents production of sperm and the male dog or cat will no longer be able to father puppies or kittens. We strongly suggest, for the safety and well-being of your pet, that you read and follow these post-operative instructions.

## Surgical Procedure

Female dogs and cats have a mid-line incision in their abdomen. Male dogs have an incision just above the scrotum and male cats have two incisions, one in each side of the scrotum. **Check the incision site at least twice daily.** What you see today is what we consider normal. There should be no drainage. Redness and swelling should be minimal. Contact us at 913-837-5341 if you see excessive redness, swelling, any discharge or blood. Male cats may appear as if they still have testicles. This is normal, the swelling should subside gradually through the recovery period. **DO NOT ALLOW YOUR PET TO LICK OR CHEW AT THE INCISION.** If this occurs, please contact the clinic immediately. Your pet has received pain medication while in the hospital. Dogs will have also have tablets to be given at home.

## In Heat

If your female dog or cat was in heat at the time of surgery, you must keep them away from un-neutered males for at least two weeks. While they are unable to become pregnant, they will still attract intact males, for a short period of time.

## Male Dogs

Male dogs will retain their male hormones for up to 60 days after surgery. It may take some time after surgery for the "male" behavior to subside. Male dogs may still have the urge to mate with females and actually may be able to impregnate females for up to 60 days due to sperm stored in the body in areas other than the testicles. Any urine "marking" behavior of male pets may subside after sterilization, but this can take a few weeks as well. The younger they are at the time of sterilization, the more successful this will be.

## Sutures

Unless you are told otherwise, your pet does not have external sutures. All sutures are absorbable on the inside and the very outer layer of skin is held together with surgical glue. Do not clean or apply topical ointment to the incision site. If you are told that your pet has skin sutures or skin staples, they will need to return in 10-14 days to have those removed. Male cats do not have any sutures.

## Activity

Some animals are active after surgery, while others are quiet. It is very important that you limit your pet's activity for the next 7-10 days. No running, jumping, playing, swimming, or other strenuous activity during the 7-10 day

recovery period. Pets must be kept indoors where they can stay clean, dry, and warm. Do not bathe your pet during the recovery period. Dogs must be walked on a leash and cats must be kept inside. Keep your pet quiet. Dogs and female cats have internal and external sutures that provide strength to the tissue as they heal. Any strenuous activity could disrupt this healing process. The healing process takes at least 7 days.

### **Feeding**

Your pet has had a small snack the night of surgery. Their appetite should return gradually within 24 hours of surgery. Lethargy lasting for more than 24 hours after surgery, diarrhea, or vomiting are not normal and you should contact us immediately. Do not change your pet's diet at this time and do not give junk food, table scraps, milk or any other people food for a period of one week. This could mask post-surgical complications.

### **Potential Complications**

Spaying and neutering are very safe surgeries; however, complications can occur. Minimal redness and swelling should resolve within several days. If it persists longer, please contact us. Please contact us immediately if you notice any of the following:

- pale gums
- depression
- vomiting
- diarrhea
- discharge or bleeding from the incision
- difficulty urinating
- labored breathing

Although routine spay and neuter surgery is a commonly performed outpatient procedure, the surgery is invasive and serious complications can result from failure to follow post-operative instructions. **Complications include**, but are not limited to: skin infection, swelling at the surgery site, opening of one or both suture layers, **internal hemorrhage and death**.

If you have any questions or concerns directly related to the surgery during the recovery period, please call **this office at 913-837-5341**. If there is an emergency after hours, you can contact **this office or the Veterinary Specialty Emergency Clinic at 913-642-9563**. Please call for an appointment as soon as you see cause for concern. We cannot be held responsible for complications resulting from failure to follow post-op instructions, or for contagious disease for which the animal was not previously properly vaccinated.

**Your pet should return to this office for suture removal / recheck ten days after the date of surgery. Please call for an appointment.**