



CHECK IN: 7:00AM-8:00AM **CHECK OUT: 4:00-6:00PM**

Surgery Aftercare for Dogs and Cats

Surgical Procedure

Your pet had general anesthesia for surgery. Each patient is placed under sedation and connected to an anesthetic machine which will help maintain their breathing and oxygen levels through surgery; this is known as general anesthetic. Routine surgery procedures require a minimal amount of time under anesthesia. After surgery patients can be groggy and fatigued. We will be monitoring their recovery while here until they are picked up and taken home.

In **female dogs and cats** the SPAY surgery involves removing the uterus and ovaries through a small incision in the abdominal wall. This will discontinue their heat cycles and prevent pregnancy. Female dogs and cats have a mid-line incision in their abdomen. During their recovery time please allow them to be separated from any unaltered males as they may still appear to be in heat and give off an odor that can attract intact males. Please check the incision site daily, the way it looks when you pick up after surgery is what we consider normal.

In **Male dogs and cats** the castration or neuter surgery involves removing only the testicles inside the scrotum. The scrotum is left intact. This operation will prevent males from being able to impregnate females.

***Please keep in mind that due to storage of sperm, dogs and cats may still be able to get a female pregnant for up to 3 months after neuter surgery.**

Male cats may appear as if they still have testicles. This is normal due to swelling which should subside gradually through the recovery period. Male dogs have an incision just above the scrotum. **Male cats** have two very tiny incisions, one on each side of the scrotum and no sutures. Check the incision site at least twice daily. What you see upon pick up is what we consider normal. See potential complication below for what is not normal.

Incision

Your pet does not have external sutures. The inner layer of abdominal tissue underneath the skin has sutures (stiches) and the very outer layer of skin is held together with surgical glue.

The incision site can be somewhat raised, due to the sutures directly underneath (similar to a drawstring type of pants) the tissue is sewn together and synched up. The area will go back to a normal appearance within a couple of weeks. During this time the scar tissue will begin repairing which can feel like a bump underneath the skin. Over the next 3-6 months the suture will stay intact and eventually dissolve within the body.

Here are a few guidelines:

- Do **not** clean or apply any ointment to the incision site.
- Do **not** allow your pet to lick or chew at the incision. As well as other pets in the household.
 - This e-collar is to remain on your pet for 7-10 days.

*An E-collar may be purchased through the medical center or at your local pet store.

Activity

Some animals want to be active after surgery, while others prefer to be quiet. It is very important that you limit your pet's activity for the next 7-10 days. The body needs time to heal and too much movement could prolong recovery.

Please restrict:

- Running
- Jumping (including furniture- bed, couch, stairs, chairs and or benches etc.)
- Playing
- Swimming
- Long walks

We encourage the leash to be worn when taken out to use the bathroom. Keep your pet(s) as quiet as possible. Any strenuous activity could disrupt the healing process and potentially cause the sutures to become loose, it can also cause swelling around the site which will prolong the recovery process and can cause discomfort. If swelling occurs it may indicate that there is too much activity and would need a veterinarian's attention.

Feeding

When your patient arrives home you may feed them their normal diet, try offering half of their normal amount first – you may offer the other ½ later in the evening. If they do not have an appetite you may offer some bland food such as rice with chicken broth mixed into their regular food. If your patient(s) has experienced any vomiting lasting more than 24 hours after surgery it is not normal and you should contact us immediately.

Pain Control

- **Dogs:** Please administer medication as prescribed, continuing for the duration of the prescription. This is to make sure that every patient has had an adequate amount to help their body cope with the discomfort.

- It is unadvisable to hold onto medication for other purposes. The medication that we send home is for surgery-related pain and not intended for other uses.
- **Cats:** are given an injection for pain control which is a slow release formula and will last for approximately 3-4 days following surgery.

Potential Complications

Spaying and neutering are safe and routine surgeries; however, complications can occur. Minimal redness and swelling at the incision site should resolve within several days. If it persists longer, please contact us.

Contact us if you notice any of the following:

- ❖ **Pale gums *Depression or lethargy *Vomiting – continuing past 24 hours**
- ❖ ***Discharge or bleeding from the incision *Difficulty urinating *Labored breathing**

In the even that your animal has problems at home, which may be related to this surgery, please attempt to contact the Medical Center. Post-operative rechecks are subject to an examination fee and payment for each medication prescribed. If such problems occur when the clinic is closed, please get veterinary attention for the problem in a timely manner. We have listed some emergency clinics below should a problem occur out of our normal business hours. This care will be obtained at your own expense. If the problem is not surgery related, please contact your own veterinarian for treatment.

United Emergency Animal Clinic 408-371-6252 located at 911 Dell Avenue Campbell

Ohlone Veterinary Emergency Clinic 510-657-6620 located at 1618 Washington Blvd. Fremont

Adobe Animal Hospital 650-948-9661 located at 4470 El Camino Real, Los Altos

Post-surgical Diarrhea

Sometimes, dogs may develop a mild and short episode of diarrhea after surgery. As you can imagine, undergoing surgery is stressful to the body. Stress induced diarrhea can be self-limiting and resolve once the dogs have had time to recover. Some dogs benefit from a bland diet when they develop diarrhea from stress. The bland diet gives their digestive tract a chance to not have to work as hard to digest their food.

Bland diets are composed of an easily digestible protein and carbohydrate source. The most common bland diet is low fat cottage cheese and cooked white rice mixed in a one to one ratio. This diet should be fed about 4 times a day in smaller amounts than their regular food diet. They should get very little to no treats at this time. Most dogs will have stool quality improvement within 2-3 days of eating this diet. Once their stool quality shows improvement, gradually mix in their regular food with the bland diet and decrease the number of meals back to twice daily.

The recommended mix is 75% bland diet mixed with 25% regular food. See how the dog does on this mix for a couple of days. If the stool continues to improve, then increase the amount of regular food to 50% of the diet and see how the dog does for another couple of days. If stool quality does not worsen, then increase the regular food by another 25% for a couple of days until you are just feeding regular food. If stool quality deteriorates or worsens during this transition time, you may have to go backwards until stool quality improves and move through the stages of increasing regular food a bit more slowly.

Diarrhea is not always due to stress. If your dog had normal stools for at least a week to 10 days after surgery and then develops diarrhea, or their activity and appetite decreases while they are having diarrhea, or the diarrhea is protracted i.e. lasting longer than 5-7 days, then this could indicate that your dog's diarrhea is not due to stress but some other, possibly more serious, medical condition and you should contact your veterinarian to examine your dog.

Stress diarrhea

- 🐾 Occurs when dogs encounter a new and potentially stressful situation such as surgery
- 🐾 Activity and appetite remains normal
- 🐾 Responsive to bland diet

Bland diet feeding regimen

100% bland diet for 2-3 days or until stool quality starts to improve

Add regular food to bland diet at 25% regular to 75% bland and feed for 2-3 days and monitor stool quality

If stools continue to improve, add 50% regular food to 50% bland diet and feed for 2-3 days

- 🐾 Increase regular food by 25% as long as stool quality remains improved
- 🐾 If stool quality deteriorates, go back to previous balance of regular to bland food and add regular food in lesser amounts to maintain improved stool quality

Call your veterinarian if

- 🐾 Your dog has diarrhea that lasts longer than 5-7 days with no improvement despite bland diet
- 🐾 Your dog has diarrhea with a concurrent decrease in activity and appetite