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PRE AND POST OPERATIVE CARE GUIDE

Date of operation:

Admission time 8am

If you do not already have one, we can prepare an estimate for the cost of the procedure for your animal.

Before the operation

On the day of the operation you will be asked to take your pet to the surgery first thing. This is so that your animal can have any pain-killers or pre-anaesthetic injections in plenty of time. These will calm your pet and help to keep the anaesthetic dose as low as possible.

For some animals and operations you will be asked to make sure your pet hasn't had any food for a certain amount of time (usually by 9pm the night before). It is very important you remember to follow these instructions. Bear in mind any other animals you may have in your house and remove their food too, if it is safe to do so, or confine your pets so that they can't get to the others' food. Water can be left down until the morning as it only needs to be withheld for two hours before the operation. Not all animals should be starved before an anaesthetic. Never restrict food in small pets like rabbits and guinea pigs. Keep cats in overnight so they are unable to scavenge. On the morning of the operation try to encourage your pet to go to the toilet. Providing a litter tray for cats or taking dogs for a short walk on the lead will usually do the job.



[On admission](#)

The person in charge of admitting your pet will ask for a few details. At this point make sure you ask any questions you have and discuss any concerns. This is also a time you can mention any extras you'd like done that might be easier while your pet is asleep like microchipping or nail clipping.



You will be asked to sign a consent form to give the vet permission to give the anaesthetic and carry out the procedure. Every anaesthetic has some risk attached to it. Rest assured that your pet will be thoroughly examined beforehand and constantly monitored during the whole procedure. Your vet may have recommended that your pet has a pre-anaesthetic blood test. It is advised for any pet but especially those who are eight and over as they are more likely to have age related problems. This is another way to assess the risks for your pet. Fluid therapy may also be recommended to reduce the risk for elderly or sick animals. **Be sure to leave contact telephone numbers and to make a note of who and when to phone for a progress report.**

[Before the operation](#)

Your pet will be weighed to ensure accurate drug doses are given. A pre-med drug may be administered to reduce anxiety, provide mild sedation and pain relief. Each pet will have an individual kennel with a comfortable bed.

[While your pet is away from home](#)

Make sure everything is ready for when you collect your pet. Organise transport and consider whether you might need an extra pair of hands getting your pet in or out of the car.

Payment will be needed at the time of the operation.

[Collecting your pet](#)

Your pet might still be a bit drowsy and looking slightly sorry for themselves. Although you may be keen to see your pet as soon as possible, the vet or nurse will give you information on home care first. This lets the team give you all the information and instructions you need without you being distracted and it's also a perfect time for you to ask any questions that you have thought of during the day. You can also settle your bill and organise any check-up appointments your pet needs.

Most cats and dogs will need an easily digestible food when they get home. We can provide this for you to make life simple. Please do ask for some if you would like it.

For rabbits it is vital that they start eating as soon as possible. We will have already offered them food at the surgery. You are welcome to leave us a small portion of their own food which they may be more likely to eat. When you bring them home, you may need to syringe feed a special recovery diet (pureed pellets are a good alternative) if they don't want to eat. If your rabbit is still not eating the day after the anaesthetic please contact us. Whatever your pet, make sure you've been told what is the best thing to feed when you get home.

Obviously many procedures can cause some discomfort in the hours or days afterwards so talk to one of the vets or nurses about what to expect. Animals have different pain thresholds just like humans and different species show pain in different ways. For example, dogs may whine, cry or limp in quite an obvious way but small pets like rabbits and rodents may become quiet and withdrawn and stop eating. Ask how painful the operation is likely to be and what to watch for. The vet will make sure your pet is as comfortable as possible and send you home with pain medication if necessary but if you are at all unsure do contact us.

Post-operative care — the basics

- Your pet may be drowsy for a period of time. Ask the vet or nurse what to expect so that you know what's normal.

- Provide your pet with a comfortable bed or basket away from draughts and noise. Don't let young children and other animals disturb them. Rabbits and small furies may need their hutches cleared of hay/straw or wood shavings and replaced with newspaper.

- Occasional vomiting may occur in the immediate post-operative period. Light palatable meals, given little and often, can help reduce the likelihood of this. If the vet has given you special food to feed make sure you use it. If vomiting occurs, please consult us.

- Exercise may need to be restricted. For at least 24 hours after an operation cats should be kept indoors and dogs restricted to short lead-walks. Please make sure you follow our advice about exercise, especially after orthopaedic surgery.

- Check the wound daily. You may need to bathe the wound occasionally and it is very important that you prevent your pet from licking it. Licking and chewing a wound can quickly damage or infect it. This may lead to your pet needing antibiotics and, if the wound has opened, more surgery may be required to repair it. Special collars, dressings and medical t-shirts are ways of preventing this. If your pet's been sent home with one do use it. Contact us if the appearance of the wound changes, for example if it looks swollen and red or starts to discharge. If you have any concerns about the practicalities of caring for your pet after the operation, please talk it through with one of the vets or nurses.

- Bandages need to be kept clean and dry. They should be checked daily for signs of swelling above or below the bandage, or seepages, discharges, unpleasant smells and so on. If at all concerned, contact us straight away.

- Make sure you give any medication at the correct dose and that you finish the course.

We would ask you to re read this guide again just prior to the operation to be sure you understand the procedure and what to expect pre and post operatively. If you are unclear in any way or if you have any other needs or questions, please contact us.

Make sure you know what signs of discomfort to look out for and have talked to us about any pain relief your pet may need.

