



POST-OPERATIVE CARE GUIDELINES

To ensure a smooth recovery, please follow these instructions carefully. It is your responsibility to read and understand these instructions.

Check your pet's mucous membrane (gum) color when you arrive home. The mucous membrane color should be a pale pink to red. More importantly, the color must quickly return to normal after applying pressure to the gums (above the canine tooth). Check your pet's color throughout the evening to verify the mucous membrane color returns to normal.

Food/Water

Offer ice chips or small amounts of water immediately after returning home. If there is no vomiting after 45 minutes, offer a very small amount of food – a mouthful or two at most. Anesthesia may cause nausea. If your pet takes a large amount of water or food, he or she will likely vomit. The key to getting your pet to recover from anesthesia is to offer very small amounts of food and water frequently – about every 45 minutes while increasing the amounts slightly each feeding. If your pet does vomit, withhold food and water for 1 hour and try again. Resume normal feeding the day after surgery. If he or she shows no interest in food or water or continually vomits for more than 24 hours post-surgery, contact the clinic. Puppies/kittens 6 months and younger must eat small amounts of food as soon as they return home to avoid a condition called hypoglycemia (low blood sugar). If your puppy/kitten is not eating within 4 hours of being picked up – please call the clinic or the after-hour's line.

Incision Care

The incision for female dogs/cats is on the belly. The incision for male dogs is just below the penis. The incision for male cats and young puppies is in the scrotum. **Do NOT allow your pet to lick at the incision as it may cause the incision to open or become infected.** As dogs are more likely to lick their incision, your dog will be sent home with an E. Collar included in the surgery price. Dogs must wear the E. Collar for at least 14 days. You may take the E. collar off when you are able to watch your dog and prevent it from licking or chewing the incision, however, it must wear the E. Collar when you are away or are sleeping. **All animals can do great damage to their incision in a short amount of time, causing infection requiring further care at your expense.** If your pet licks the incision, you will need to purchase an Elizabethan Collar (E. Collar). Check your pet's incision daily for redness, swelling, discharge, or wound opening. It is normal to expect some redness and swelling the size of a marble. Contact the clinic if the swelling looks excessive, if there is discharge, or opening of the incision.

Do not clean the incision - you may introduce infection. The incision needs to remain dry. If it becomes dirty, use a cotton ball and water and gently blot around the area. Do not bathe your pet for at least 14 days. Dry shampoos are available at the local pet store. Your pet has buried sutures, so there is no need for suture removal unless you are told otherwise.

Your dog or cat will have a small (approximately 1/2") green surgical mark near the incision site. This mark indicates that your pet has been sterilized and prevents further unnecessary anesthesia and/or surgery if your pet is lost.

Activity

All post-operative patients must be kept indoors for the next 24 hours and as much as possible for the next 14 days. Discourage any running or jumping and limit stair climbing as much as possible. Outdoor pets may stay in a clean, warm garage if you are able to watch him or her closely there. Keep your postoperative pet quiet and give him or her comfort. Please also keep your pet away from small children. Please leash walk your dog for 14 days. Do not allow any free roaming. This can be extremely dangerous for your dog. Male dogs/cats remain virile for 3-4 weeks after surgery. Keep them confined.

Pain

Some discomfort 24-36 hours post-op is normal. Vocalizing and shaking the night of surgery can be a side effect of anesthesia. Make sure your pet is eating as this will help the anesthesia leave his or her body. Additionally, rub and stimulate your pet and offer comfort and reassurance. Your pet should continually improve. He or she should feel better every day. If you purchased pain medication from the clinic, please carefully follow the directions on the container. Begin any pain medication the morning after surgery only if your pet is eating a full meal. Occasionally, pain medications can upset the stomach. If your pet begins to vomit after pain meds are given, stop giving the medication. If you have any questions, please contact the clinic.

If you feel your pet is in need of pain-relieving medication, other than what was dispensed by the clinic, please contact the clinic or our on-call staff before administering any medicines. Some over-the-counter medications can be very dangerous to your pet. Do NOT give your pet Tylenol (Acetaminophen), Motrin (Ibuprofen) or aspirin as these medications can be deadly to your pet.

If you have a female dog/cat that was in heat at the time of surgery, she will still show signs of bleeding, swollen vulva, and attract males for up to two weeks.

If any of the following conditions occur, please contact The PAW Mission immediately:

- Loss of appetite for more than two days - Refusal to drink water for more than 24 hours - Blood coming from the incision - Vomiting for more than 24 hours - Diarrhea for more than 24 hours - Discharge from the incision - The incision has opened up

Text 909-784-5895 during business hours (8am-4pm) or after hours between 6pm-10pm and 4am-8am. The PAW Mission's after hours line is an advice line for post-surgical questions and information on possible postsurgical complications. **This is NOT an emergency line.** If you feel your pet is in critical condition, please visit your local emergency veterinary clinic immediately.

The PAW Mission will treat at our clinic, at minimal cost, any post-op complications resulting directly from the surgery, if the above post-op instructions are followed in full. Your regular veterinarian must address illnesses or injuries that are not a direct result of surgery. We cannot be held responsible for complications resulting from failure to follow post-op instructions or for contagious diseases. **The PAW Mission cannot reimburse you for veterinary care.**

