

### **What happens after I drop off my pet for surgery?**

Patients dropped off for surgery are given a complete physical by the veterinarian that is performing surgery on that particular day. They listen to the heart and lungs, take their temperature, examine their eyes and ears, check for external parasites and check any other issues that may have been noted by the owner at drop off.

A blood sample is drawn so that we can run a pre-anesthetic panel prior to giving your pet any medications. This blood work checks your pet's blood sugar as well as kidney and liver function. Most pre-anesthetic and anesthetic drugs are removed from the body via the liver and/or kidneys, so we want to be sure that these organs are working properly.

All hospitalized patients are given a tablet by mouth called Capstar. This product kills any adult fleas that may be on your pet or may try to hitch a ride off of someone else. We want to ensure that no one goes home from their hospital stay with fleas.

If all checks out with the physical exam and blood work, the next step is what we call a pre-med injection. This injection may be one drug or a combination of drugs that are given to sedate your pet prior to the insertion of an IV catheter. This injection is given approximately 10-15 minutes prior to the placement of the IV catheter and further anesthesia.

Once your pet is relaxed, it is time for anesthesia. A small area on one of the legs is clipped and cleaned and an IV catheter is inserted and taped into place. This catheter gives us a portal for placement of the next IV anesthetic and also for delivery of IV fluids during the surgical procedure. An IV anesthetic is given and works very quickly with your pet becoming unconscious within a matter of seconds. Once this occurs, an endotracheal tube is placed into the airway and your pet's anesthesia is now being maintained on a mixture of oxygen and an inhalant anesthesia. The level of anesthesia is constantly monitored by a CVT throughout the anesthesia and surgical procedure.

Dental patients are placed on a heating pad on a table in the treatment area, IV fluids are started and the cardiac monitor is hooked up. The cardiac monitor monitors your pet's heart rate, blood oxygenation and blood pressure and is present throughout the entire anesthetic process. Before and after photos are taken of your pet's teeth and become a permanent part of their medical record. The dental scaling and polishing is done by a CVT—a full oral exam and any extractions deemed necessary are done by the veterinarian.

If your pet is in for a surgical procedure, the surgical area is clipped and scrubbed before being moved into the surgery suite. The animals are placed on a circulating water blanket in order to help them to maintain their body temperature during the surgery. IV fluids and the cardiac monitor are also started on these patients and maintained throughout the procedure. The veterinarian puts on a surgical cap and mask prior to scrubbing for the procedure. He/she then dons a sterile surgery gown and gloves. The surgical area is draped with sterile drape and surgery is performed with the selected surgery pack of instruments necessary for that procedure.

Once the surgical procedure or dental is complete, your pet is given pure oxygen for a time to aid in removing the inhalant anesthetic from its system. Your pet is monitored until his/her swallowing reflex returns. The endotracheal tube is not removed until your pet can swallow in order to prevent aspiration of any fluid into the lungs. Once the tube and their IV catheter has been removed and your pet is recovering from the anesthesia, they are placed on a heated pad back into their cage/run until they are fully recovered.

The length of their stay in the hospital depends on the procedure and their recovery from the anesthesia. Some animals recover more quickly than others and we do not send them home until we feel it is safe to do so. Some more involved surgical procedures require an overnight stay so that we can ensure that they get a full night's rest in a quiet area and so that we can check their incisions and ensure that they are eating prior to discharge.

The utmost care is taken to ensure that your pet's stay here is safe and comfortable and we strive to give them the best care that is available. We will not make sacrifices when it comes to the health and safety of your pet. If you have any questions or concerns about your pet's upcoming surgery, please feel free to call us at 325-2106 and we'll gladly discuss them with you.