

Caring for your pet after surgery



Following surgery each patient will be given a detailed personalised care plan, but to give you an idea, please see general information below:-

Anaesthesia

In many cases, a small area of hair on the foreleg will have been clipped. This is to aid the vet in giving an anaesthetic directly into your pet's bloodstream to ensure he falls asleep quickly and pleasantly. The hair will normally grow back in 6-8 weeks. Your pet may also have had a tube passed down his trachea (windpipe) whilst asleep so that he can breathe a gaseous anaesthetic. Following removal of this tube some pets may cough a little upon waking from anaesthesia. There are many different anaesthetics used in modern veterinary practice. Some of these have a shorter recovery time than others. The breed, age and general condition of your pet, as well as the surgical procedure(s) being performed also have an effect on the recovery time. Your veterinary surgeon or veterinary nurse will advise on the expected full recovery time for your pet.

Care at home

When you get your pet home, you should keep him warm, quiet and comfortable. Provide gentle reassurance and do not allow children or other pets to excite him.

Depending on the type of anaesthetic given, there may be some drowsiness in the evening or even the next day. Your pet should not be allowed out of doors unsupervised or off the lead, as they might still be a bit 'wobbly', disorientated or have lost their road sense temporarily. Remember that an area around an operation site can be painful so avoid handling unless instructed to do so. If you are at all worried about any change in the condition of your pet please ring the hospital immediately.

Surgical Wounds

If your pet has had surgery there will usually be an incision (surgical wound) at the site of the operation. The surgical site, unless you have been advised otherwise, should require no attention. However, we advise you to check the wound daily and report any swelling, persistent discharge/bleeding or loss of stitches to the surgery. Try to discourage your pet from licking excessively at any wounds or stitches – far from having a healing action it can actually delay healing and cause the wound to break down. It may be necessary for a special collar to be fitted to prevent your pet from damaging the wound.

Removal of stitches

Where necessary your pet should be returned in 7-10 days for removal of the stitches. The exact timing will depend on the nature of the procedure performed and you will be advised of this.