

Bringing Your Pet for Surgery



Bringing your pet to the vet for surgery can be a stressful experience and we understand the worry and anxiety that goes with it. After all, we are all pet owners ourselves.

We hope this leaflet will help explain what happens during the day and reassure you of the care and attention your pet will receive from our highly skilled and qualified vets and nurses.

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Surgical Procedures

Neutering is usually the first surgical procedure that your pet will undergo and it can be a very worrying time for owners. Although it is often regarded as a routine operation as it is performed daily by vets, it is major surgery (particularly for female pets) and requires a skilled and experienced veterinary surgeon. We understand your worries and treat neutering with the same care and attention to detail with which we approach all surgical procedures.

Admission

We ask all pets that are coming for surgical procedures to arrive for an admission appointment between 8.30 am and 9am. This is so that we can give your pet time to settle in to its new surroundings, and for the pre-medication drugs to take full effect before the operation.

The Veterinary Nurse will check that your pet has been starved from 6pm the night before. This is important as food in your pet's stomach will affect the anaesthetic procedure and may put your pet at risk. The nurse will weigh your pet to ensure that the correct doses of anaesthesia, pain relief and other medication are given. You will be asked to read carefully then sign a consent form which states the procedure to be carried out and any specific details will be checked with you. For instance you may be asked to point out the exact position of lumps to be removed or to confirm the appropriate limb for surgery.

The nurse will ask whether you wish **Pre-anaesthetic blood tests** to be performed. The tests can highlight any undiagnosed conditions such as liver or kidney conditions which would affect the type and level of anaesthesia required. It is especially recommended in older pets. Pre-anaesthetic testing is optional and a separate charge is made for this.

You will be asked for a contact phone number where you can be reached that day. If you wish, this can be used by the Nurse to let you know when the procedure is completed and your pet has woken up from the anaesthetic. It may also be used by the Vet to confirm any further treatment which may be necessary during the surgery. Every attempt is made to contact you for permission if there is a change in the planned course of treatment unless the delay would affect your pet's immediate health.

Settling In

Your pet will then be settled into one of our kennels and given a pre-operative sedative to induce a feeling of calm and wellbeing. The kennel is specially prepared for your pet in advance and will be reserved for its sole use during the stay. The kennels are designed for convalescing pets and are thoroughly disinfected after each use. They are warm and secure and allow easy access for the nurse who will be monitoring your pet's progress. Your pet's name and details and any medication or special requirements are attached to the kennel during their stay.

Anaesthesia

The surgical procedure will begin when your pet is calm and relaxed usually from half an hour to two hours after admission. The vets operating will work in order of priority in terms of the animals they will be treating that morning so it may not be possible to give an exact time when the procedure will take place. A qualified nurse will keep a detailed record of the anaesthesia and monitor your pet's heart rate, breathing and responses throughout the procedure. We use up to date drugs and equipment allowing pets to wake up quickly and experience fewer side-effects than with some older or cheaper products.

Surgery

During the procedure the vets will need to shave the surgical site and areas where intravenous medication is administered. To minimize the risk of infection all internal surgery is performed in a dedicated sterile operating theatre. The nurse uses a specialised liquid to cleanse the surgical site. A freshly autoclaved (sterilised) surgical pack of instruments and drapes is used for each procedure exactly as it is in human surgery.

Our vets request the highest standard of equipment available to them for surgical procedures and have Radiography (X-Ray), Ultrasound scanning, Endoscopes and laboratory equipment on hand to support their diagnosis. The vets are all experienced in surgical techniques and perform gentle skilled surgery with the comfort and care of your pet as their priority. Scarring is minimised as far as possible with high quality suture or stapling materials.

Pain Relief

To ensure the procedure is as pain free as possible for your pet we prefer to give an initial analgesic with the pre-operative sedative. This is then effective as soon as surgery begins and ensures that your pet experiences the minimum of trauma. Pain relief is continued throughout the procedure and the nurse carefully monitors your pet's behaviour as they recover to allow further pain relief to be administered if necessary.

Recovery

When the surgery is complete the nurse monitors your pet as they return to consciousness from the anaesthetic and returns them to their kennel to recover fully. Your pet is then checked regularly throughout the day to assess their continuing recovery. At this stage the nurse will call you to let you know how the procedure went and to make collection arrangements. We prefer to allow your pets time to wake up completely from the anaesthetic before they go home so this is likely to be after 4pm.

Hospitalisation

Occasionally your pet may need to stay overnight for further treatment or observation. In this instance it may be possible for you to visit your pet if you wish. An appointment to visit can be made and a nurse will accompany you to answer any questions you may have about your pet's treatment. Remember your pet will be feeling delicate and there may be other animals receiving treatment nearby so disturbance or noise should be kept to a minimum. As the nurses will be required to continue their care of all the inpatients we do request that you keep your visits short. Sometimes the vet may advise that a visit is not appropriate, this because your pet's condition may be adversely affected by the excitement that your pet will feel and the frustration of not being able to get out to greet you. In this instance we will do our utmost to ensure that you are fully informed of your pet's well-being.

The level of care that your pet needs will be assessed by the vet and regular monitoring will continue at that level throughout the night if it is necessary. A vet and nurse are always on call for hospitalised pets.

Collecting Your Pet

Despite having had major surgery, you will be reassured to find that your pet will show few signs of distress when you collect them beyond being a little tired. This is due to the gentle techniques, high quality of anaesthesia and comprehensive pain relief used at Avonvale; plus the natural recuperative powers of animals. Generally your appointment will be with the nurse who will talk you through the operation and explain how to look after your pet at home. This is supported with a written care sheet for you to follow. It is important that the person who will be looking after your pet attends so that they understand exactly how to monitor your pet's recovery and administer any medication. The nurse will be happy to answer any questions you may have.

If there are x-rays or laboratory test results to discuss the discharge appointment will be made with the vet who performed the procedure.

A **Post-Op Checkup** appointment will be arranged with you usually 2 days after the procedure. It is important to keep this to allow the nurse to check that the healing process is satisfactory and to catch any signs of infection early. If your pet has stitches these will need to be removed by the nurse approximately 10 days after the procedure. Provided no further medication or dressings are required there will be no charge for the removal of stitches.

24 Hour Emergency Care

Very occasionally animals experience adverse reactions after surgery. Our 24 Hour emergency service means that you can contact an Avonvale vet at any time if you have concerns about your pet following surgery.

We hope this leaflet has given you confidence in the level of care we will give your pet during their stay with us. If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to call us or speak to our nurses when you visit.