

# Before surgery: things you need to know



**HUON VALLEY  
VETERINARY  
HOSPITAL**

## Before coming to hospital

Many surgical procedures can be performed in a single day, with your pet coming to hospital in the morning and returning home that evening. If your pet is undergoing a more complex procedure, they may have to be hospitalised for longer until you and they can cope at home.

Some procedures can be carried out under sedation and local anaesthetic but the vast majority of them are performed whilst your pet is fully asleep, under a general anaesthetic.

If your pet is going to have a general anaesthetic, please withhold food on the day of surgery, with the exception of rabbits and pocket pets. Water is ok.

## Admission time

An admission appointment will be made, usually between 8am and 9am. The admission process will take approximately 10 minutes and will include signing an admission form detailing the treatment to be undertaken and the method of payment for when you collect your pet.

Once your pet's procedure has been completed we will contact you to schedule a discharge appointment. During this appointment a nurse will go through the home care instructions for your pet. Please be sure to give us full contact details so we can reach you during the day.

Payment for treatment is due at the time your pet is discharged from hospital.

## Pre-anaesthetic blood tests

We can perform a pre-anaesthetic blood profile that checks your pet's basic health status.

Although we highly recommend this for all patients over 7 years, it is useful information to have for any patient. It is best to know in advance if an underlying condition is present and it gives us baseline values in case of post operative complications.

Please indicate on the admission form if you would like this done for your pet.

## Intravenous fluids

Your pet will receive intravenous fluids during surgery to help maintain their blood pressure and circulation to their body's tissues and organs. Good circulation is vital for healing.

## Hair clipping

We need to clip a generous amount of hair around the surgical site to make the skin easier to prepare for surgery. This also helps to minimise the incidence of post operative wound infection.

Hair may be clipped from the underside of the neck and from the legs to allow access to the veins to take blood samples or to give medication and fluids.

## During Anaesthesia & Surgery

Your pet's safety and comfort are paramount, so to help ensure a successful outcome we use new and safer anesthetic agents as well as top quality materials.

Our highly trained staff use specialised equipment to monitor your pet's anaesthetic during their procedure and in the post anaesthetic or surgery period. Your pet will be kept warm at all times for their comfort and to aid their healing.

## Pain relief

Pre and post operative pain relief are routinely given to maintain your pet's comfort. Depending on the procedure, on going medication may be dispensed to be given to your pet at home.

## What to expect at home

Your pet will probably be given sedation prior to their anaesthetic and so may be drowsy for up to 24 hours after surgery. Make sure your pet is kept in a warm environment and given assistance if required to go to the toilet. Your pet may not feel like eating on the day of surgery, but we would like them to start eating by the next day. One of our staff members will give you a call to check if all is well, but be sure to contact us sooner if you have any concerns.



**For after hours  
emergency services  
please call Animal  
Emergency Service on  
0427 025 073**



## Wound care & medications at home

- Unless your pet has a discharging wound that needs to be bathed, the general rule is to keep surgical wounds dry.
- If your pet is distressed and licking or biting their wound, let us know so we can supply a protective collar.
- Keep bandages dry. If they become wet or soiled they need to be changed.
- If a leg is bandaged please monitor for swelling below the bandage, indicating that it is too tight. If this occurs, please loosen the bandage if possible and let us know immediately.
- Your pet may have medication dispensed to be given at home. If you are having problems with any medications or dressings please contact us straight away.

## Follow up

For the majority of procedures, wound drains are removed at 4 days, and sutures at 10-14 days, after surgery. Please see reception staff for appointments and follow up visits.

For more complex procedures your vet may require other visits to be scheduled. This information will be given to you at the time your pet is discharged from hospital. The cost of suture removal is included in the treatment fee but a revisit fee is generally charged for progress examinations.