



Post-Operative Discharge Instructions

The two complications you are trying to prevent during your pet's recovery from surgery are 1) tearing of the sutures and 2) infection at the surgical site. The external incision and tattoo are closed with surgical skin glue which will dissolve over time; you may notice some clear crusting at the surgical site, this is the surgical skin glue. The internal sutures will dissolve on their own over several months; during this time you may be able to feel a series of small lumps or knots under the skin at the surgery site. This is normal.

Please follow these instructions to ensure your pet has a smooth and rapid recovery:

- **Activity**
 - **Restrict your pet's activity during the post-op recovery period.** No running, jumping, playing, or other strenuous activity for the next 7-10 days. Dogs should be taken out to relieve themselves on short leash walks only. If your pet is too active, confine him or her to a smaller area, such as a bathroom. Dogs should be crated, if necessary, to restrict activity. Give them plenty of safe toys to keep them mentally stimulated.
- **Incision Site Care**
 - Keep the incision dry. No swimming or baths for 10 days.
 - **Dogs:** All dogs must wear an e-collar for 7-10 days after the surgery to prevent licking / chewing at the incision, which is the number one cause of post-operative complications.
 - **Cats:** Use of an e-collar is strongly advised for female cats. Male cats rarely need to wear an e-collar post-op, as their incisions are so small that they tend not to bother the incisions, however if they do start excessively licking or chewing at the incision, we would recommend purchasing one.
 - **Check the incision site at least twice a day until healed (approximately 10 days).** Look for redness, swelling, or drainage (anything oozing from the incision). If you see any of these, it generally means your pet is being too active or is licking/chewing at the incision and may be developing an infection. Restrict your pet's activity as much as possible and, make sure he or she has a properly fitted e-collar, to prevent further irritation of the surgical site. If you see excessive redness, swelling, or discharge at the incision site please contact us to schedule a recheck appointment.*

- **Eating**
 - You may offer your pet a small meal the same night of surgery. Your pet may be quiet and/or inappetent for 24-48 hours after the surgery. Pets react differently to surgery and anesthesia; some recover more slowly than others. If your pet does not want to eat the first night, that is ok; however, if your pet's appetite does not return after 24-48 hrs please contact us to schedule a re-check appointment, as this could be a sign of a complication.*
- **Pain Medication**
 - Dogs: Give your dog the first dose of the Tramadol (pain medication) provided the evening you bring him or her home from surgery. Tramadol is then to be given approximately every 12 hours (morning and night) until finished. The amount of the dose depends on your dog's weight - dosing directions for your dog is found on the label of the pill vial you have been given.
 - Cats: Your cat has been given an injection of Buprenorphine SR, an extended release pain medication. The Buprenorphine SR lasts approximately 72 hours. You may notice some lethargy associated with this medication, or the opposite may be true for cats: young cats can experience hyperactivity during the first 24 hours on the medication. Please let us know if your cat is displaying any of the following symptoms: fever, extreme lethargy, vomiting, swelling, pain or sensitivity in between the shoulder-blades (injection site).

***Re-check appointments** – To schedule a re-check appointment please call the medical center at 202-726-2273 or email us at medicalcenter@humanerescuealliance.org. In most cases, post-op complications are not an emergency and can wait until the next business day to be checked. **We are open Monday through Friday, 9am to 5pm. We are closed on Saturdays and Sundays.** If you feel your pet needs urgent medical attention when we are closed, you must take him or her to a veterinarian, if necessary (especially in cases of bleeding, fever, or extreme lethargy), to an animal emergency clinic. Note: surgery and the associated stress can strain the immune system and cause manifestation of pre-existing problems and/or development of infectious diseases. It is the pet owner's responsibility to ensure that pets are up to date on vaccines prior to surgery.

Please note: Although instances are rare, it is possible for a male animal to impregnate a female for up to two weeks after being neutered. For this reason, male animals should be kept separate from un-spayed female animals for two weeks following their neuter surgery to prevent the possibility of an accidental litter.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding your pet's surgery, please call the medical center at 202-726-2273 or email us at medicalcenter@humanerescuealliance.org.