

Animal Hospital of Lynnfield
One Bay State Road
Lynnfield, MA 01940
781-334-4161

Frequently Asked Questions About Surgery

Q: What if I have questions about the surgery?

A: Please contact the office prior to the procedure if you still have questions. We want you to understand the surgical procedure, potential complications, and postoperative care completely. You play an important role in your pet's recovery. Please make certain to ask the surgery staff if you have any additional questions. All of the surgical staff are highly trained and should be able to answer most of your questions.

Q: How much will the surgery and related care cost?

A: The surgeon will make an estimate for you if requested. The staff can go over the estimate and answer any questions you have about the costs. Suture removal is performed at no charge. You will be charged separately for future rechecks. It is rare for us to go outside of this estimate, but if we feel we may, we will contact you as soon as possible. Our first priority is the health and well being of your pet.

Q: Can my pet eat before or after surgery?

A: Please **DO NOT** feed your pet (including treats) after 8pm the night before surgery. You may give your pet water up until you drop him/her off at the clinic. Ask the staff about special instructions for very young animals. Depending on the type of surgery, and how early in the day the surgery is performed, your pet may get a light meal the same evening after surgery. Otherwise they will be fed the next morning.

Q: My pet takes medication. Should I give the medication the morning of surgery?

A: Do not give medications the morning of surgery unless otherwise specified by the veterinarian.

Q: When can my pet be groomed or have a bath after surgery?

A: We recommend you bathe your dog a few days prior to surgery. This removes dirt and loose fur, which speeds up the surgical preparation. It will be at least 2 weeks after surgery before the pet should be bathed again. Make certain to tell the groomer about the surgery so they can take extra care that the pet doesn't hurt themselves while being bathed or groomed.

Q: What time should I arrive at the hospital to bring my pet for surgery?

A: Surgery patients are admitted to the hospital between 6:30 – 8:00 AM if scheduled on Monday or Friday and 7:30-8:30 AM for Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday. Please walk dogs to go to the bathroom before you come in. You will be asked to fill out and sign the surgery consent form. Please let us know if you have any last minute instructions or concerns prior to surgery. For your convenience we can admit your pet for surgery the night before. You will be charged a small additional fee for hospitalization overnight.

Q: When during the day will my pet's surgery be performed and how will I know how my pet is doing after surgery?

A: We perform scheduled surgery from 8 AM until 4 PM; however emergencies can alter our schedule. The surgery order is based on many criteria and is decided the day of surgery. We understand how anxious it is waiting for news, but you can be assured the surgeon will call you as soon as your pet is waking up from surgery. If there is any complication or problem, we will call you directly from the surgery suite. Please do not call before 4 PM for updates. It is **very** important that we be able to reach you the day of surgery, so be sure to leave us with the appropriate contact information.

Q: I am concerned about my pet being under anesthesia. How does that work?

A: We use the same drugs and monitoring equipment used in human medicine. The anesthetic protocol will vary somewhat based on the individual's health and the type of surgery performed. Generally, the patient is given premedication prior to the surgery to relax them and decrease the dose of general anesthesia. For patients whose owners have approved the use of an intravenous catheter, it is then placed to give fluids during the surgery and recovery. Intravenous fluids help to maintain blood pressure and also provide a quick access if emergency drugs or additional pain medications are needed. When we are ready for surgery, the pet is given an intravenous induction drug. We give just enough of the drug to relax their jaw and place a tube into their airway. The patient is then kept on general gas anesthetic for the remainder of the procedure. We use isoflurane exclusively. Patients in the surgery suite will be monitored not only by a technician, but also with equipment like an ECG, automatic blood pressure monitor, pulse oximeter and respiration monitor. After surgery a technician will monitor your pet and provide needed care.

Q: Will my pet be in pain after surgery?

A: We take pain control very seriously. **All** surgery patients get postoperative narcotics before they even wake up from surgery. The first 12-24 hours after surgery are the most critical for pain control. We generally discharge dogs after surgery with anti-inflammatories. In some situations we will use a Fentanyl patch, which slowly releases pain medication through the skin. This takes 12-24 hours to take affect, but lasts for 3-5 days.

Q: When do I pick up my pet and what do we do once we get home?

A: Discharge times depend on what surgery was performed. Certain types of surgeries may require a longer hospitalization stay. A general discharge time will be given to you by the surgeon after surgery has been completed, so you will know after what time you can pick up your pet. A staff member will explain the written discharge instructions you will receive and answer any questions. Your next visit (normally suture removal) can be scheduled at this time. If you have questions once you get home please call us. We want to make certain your pet gets the absolute best care.

Q: When can my pet go back to running and playing?

A: Return to function (running, playing, training, working) will be specifically stated on the discharge instructions. It is very important that while your pet has the sutures, you minimize any licking or scratching at the surgical site. It is very important to follow these instructions to achieve the best surgical outcome.