



HUMANE SOCIETY OF TAMPA BAY

Animal Health Center

3809 N. Armenia Ave.
Tampa, FL 33607-1322
(813) 870 – 3304

General post-operative instructions

Your dog or cat has undergone general anesthesia, surgical sterilization, and possible vaccination. For the safety of you and your animal, we recommend the following post-operative instructions be carefully reviewed and followed. If you have any concerns about your pet's condition after surgery, please call the Animal Health Center at (813) 870-3304 Monday – Friday 8am-5pm.

1. Dogs and cats must be kept indoors after surgery. This will enable you to closely monitor your pet's recovery and will prevent complications and possible death from exposure to outdoor temperature extremes.
2. *Restrict activity for the next seven (7) days – no running, jumping, playing.* Keep pets on leash when outside. Take stairs slowly and one step at a time. After the initial seven days of rest, increase the amount of activity allowed over the second week, closely monitoring the incision site for abnormalities. Muscle swelling and fluid pockets are common signs of too much activity after surgery.
3. Due to the lingering effects of anesthesia, your pet may be sedated or groggy this evening. Sedation may last 24 hours. Side effects of vaccination may also be present (pain at limb[s], lethargy, and mild fever.) Report facial swelling and hives immediately.
4. *Do not offer food to patients immediately upon returning home**. Anticipate possible gastrointestinal upset after anesthesia. Restrict your dog or cat from food or water for at least four (4) hours this evening. You can provide one or two ice cubes to lick or chew during this time. You may give a small amount of your pet's normal food and small amount of water after the initial time has elapsed. Gradually increase the amount of food and water you offer your pet over the next day. If your pet is uninterested in the normal food, offer a small amount of specialty canned food or meat flavored baby food to stimulate the appetite. After 24 hours, your pet's food and water consumption should return to normal.

**Exception: Puppies and kittens less than 6 months of age should be fed small amounts soon after arriving home to avoid hypoglycemia.*

5. A special head collar may have been sent home with your pet. Keep this Elizabethan collar (E-collar) on *at all times* for 10-14 days after surgery. This barrier is necessary to prevent your pet from over-grooming or chewing at the incision site. Replace the collar immediately if your pet removes the collar. Ensure the collar is not too tight by allowing just a two-finger space between the neck and tie for a snug but comfortable fit.

6. Check the incision twice daily. A small amount of seeping of brown or reddish discharge is normal for a few days following surgery. You may notice some bruising or minor swelling near the incision. If you notice any continued drainage or swelling, or the incision is not healing, contact the Animal Health Center to schedule a recheck. If the problem is severe, please contact one of the emergency numbers as soon as possible (see below).

7. If the incision becomes dirty, gently clean with diluted cool soapy water and a cotton ball or soft cloth. Pat dry. Do not apply ointments or creams to the incision unless specifically directed by the veterinarian. Dressings and ointments keep the incision moist and may delay healing.

8. Do not bathe or allow your pet to swim for at least 10-14 days after surgery. Gently towel dry the incision site if the pet becomes wet.

9. *Do not administer medication to your pet after surgery, unless specifically prescribed by the veterinarian.* Many human products are toxic to dogs and cats or have a very narrow safety range compared to humans. Tylenol (acetaminophen) and aspirin can be deadly. If your pet has been prescribed medication, please read the label carefully.

10. Use paper litter or crystals (e.g. Yesterday's News) for 7-10 days after surgery.

11. After hours services are not available at the Animal Health Center. If you require *emergency* assistance for your pet when the Animal Health Center is closed, please call an animal emergency clinic for treatment. The Humane Society of Tampa Bay will not cover expenses at these or any other veterinary hospitals.

Tampa Bay Veterinary Emergency Services at 238 Bearss Ave E. in Tampa. (813) 265-4043

Animal Emergency Clinic of Brandon located at 693 W. Lumsden Rd. (813) 684-3013

Animal Emergency Clinic of St. Petersburg located at 3165 22nd Ave N. (727) 323-1311

Blue Pearl located at 3000 Busch Lake Blvd. (813) 933-8944

Brandon Veterinary Specialists located at 723 W. Lumsden Rd. (813) 571-3303