



Collaroy Veterinary Services

Complete and total pet care · open 7 days · 24hr emergency service · boarding · grooming · fully equipped · modern facilities

Information sheet

How do I care for my pet after surgery?

After routine operations most animals should be ready to come home within a few hours of waking up from the anaesthesia. It is quite common for an animal to appear 'groggy' for a few hours after a general anaesthetic and it may sleep longer and more deeply than normal. Your pet may be a little unsteady on its feet at first.

Some animals take longer to come round and your vet will not allow the release of your pet until they are fully conscious. The vet or nurse will tell you when your pet can eat and drink again, whether they will need any medication and when they will need to be brought back to have their stitches removed.

Keep your pet warm on its journey home. At home your pet should be left in a warm, quiet room until it is fully recovered. Cats should be kept indoors (with access to a litter tray) and dogs should not be taken for a walk (they can be let out in the garden to relieve themselves) for at least 24 hours. Try to keep your pet quiet because any sudden movements may put a strain on the stitches. Your vet may prescribe pain killers, antibiotics or some other drugs to keep your pet comfortable and prevent infection.

Occasionally, your pet may feel sick or vomit – if this happens give plenty of water but do not feed it for 24 hours. A tube is put down your pet's throat during the anaesthetic to help it breath and occasionally this irritates the windpipe and may cause it to cough for a few days.

If your pet is still dull or moving unsteadily when he has been home for 24 hours you should call your vet for advice. If the stitches have come out or split, or if there are any convulsions, prolonged retching or vomiting or signs of swelling, discharges or bleeding from the operation wound contact your vet immediately.

Most animals try to lick their wounds but they should eventually get used to having stitches. Wounds heal faster if they are kept clean and dry and left open to the air. Try to avoid bandaging wounds and always stop your pet if you see it licking its stitches. If your pet does try to remove his stitches your vet may give you an 'Elizabethan collar' to fit around their neck to prevent them licking or scratching at the wound.