

HOLT VETERINARY CLINIC
HUGH T. FAUSER, M.S., D.V.M.
PHONE: (517) 694-9510

1836 CEDAR STREET
HOLT, MICHIGAN 48842
www.holtveterinaryclinic.com

YOUR PET'S SURGICAL VISIT

Most of you with a cat or dog who has undergone surgery really know very little of what happens to your pet between the time he or she is "dropped off and picked up." In a general way, I am going to describe the rest to that surgery day for you.

Your pet is welcomed on the day of surgery by the receptionist and veterinary assistant who escort him or her either to the cat ward or to the dog kennel. The cage or run has been cleaned, disinfected, and prepared with soft bedding prior to your pet's arrival. There is a short social time during which your pet becomes acclimated to the surroundings and to the staff.

Shortly after your pet's arrival at the clinic, the surgery suite is readied for the procedure to be done. All the sterile equipment, surgical packs, drapes, and sutures are prepared for use. Next your pet is carried, if possible, to the surgical preparation area to begin anesthesia. Your pet is continuously stroked and talked to.

The method of inducing anesthesia varies between small dogs and cats, and larger dogs. Smaller pets begin anesthesia by breathing a mixture of the anesthetic gas and ninety-six percent oxygen until he or she is sleepy. Large dogs begin anesthesia with an intravenous injection of valium and ketamine. Once lightly anesthetized, when appropriate pets have an endotracheal tube placed into their trachea to create an open airway for efficient delivery of the anesthetic gas/oxygen mixture and for removal of waste anesthetic gas and carbon dioxide. While anesthetized, your pet is either able to breathe on his or her own, or the surgical technician may control his or her breathing, if needed. Next, your pet has the surgical area shaved clear of fur and scrubbed many times with disinfectant to remove debris and skin bacteria. Now your pet is moved into the surgery room and properly positioned for the surgical procedure with support padding and heat supplied if required.

Once in the sterile surgery room, sterile

surgical drapes are placed over the entire body so that only the scrubbed surgical area is exposed. The doctor, who has scrubbed, capped, gowned, masked, and gloved, approaches surgery. Only now, some ten to fifteen minutes from the time your pet began anesthesia, are all the sterile packs containing sponges and instruments opened. Your pet's surgical procedure begins. Surgery time varies from one-half hour to many hours depending upon the medical complexity.

While surgery is underway, your pet's heart, respiration, reflexes and anesthetic level are continuously monitored for optimum conditions.

Most pets are given a drug during surgery to eliminate their respiratory secretions and lessen the chances of their vomiting after they awaken. As soon as the surgical procedure is finished, the anesthetic is turned off and your pet breathes oxygen until he or she is awake enough to have the endotracheal tube removed from the trachea. Shortly thereafter, your pet is awake and trying to figure out what, or if, anything really happened. The ease and speed with which pets come out of anesthesia varies with each individual.

Immediately after surgery, your pet receives intensive nursing care designed to keep him or her comfortable. This may include stroking your pet, carrying your pet around, or simply talking to your pet, while keeping him or her warm and secure. Food, water, a walk outside or a litter box, are provided when your pet has regained coordination.

This is a short synopsis of a pet's surgical visit and does not include variations in anesthetic procedures dictated by differing sizes and breeds of pets, nor the complexities of certain surgical procedures and individual instrumentation requirements. I hope this article helps remove some of the mystery and fear you, as a pet owner, go through when your pet is away from home for surgery.

Hugh T. Fauser M.S., D.V.M.

ANY FURTHER QUESTIONS YOU MAY HAVE CAN BE ANSWERED BY CALLING OUR OFFICE.
PRACTICE OF VETERINARY MEDICINE, SURGERY AND DENTISTRY

VETERINARY FILE: YOUR PET'S SURGICAL VISIT