

### **Pre-operative Instructions and Surgical Descriptions**

While not required, it is recommended that all animals are current on vaccinations prior to their surgical date.

Do not feed your adult animal any food (including treats) after 10pm the night before surgery; your animal can have access to water.

If your animal is in need of a bath, please note that bathing and grooming should be avoided for up to 2 weeks after surgery while the incision heals.

Your animal will be kenneled in a clean, size appropriate kennel with a towel/blanket. SVACA's veterinarian will provide a cursory exam, evaluating the overall health of your animal. At this time, a pre-anesthetic agent will be administered. This will provide pain control and reduce your animal's anxiety in a new place before the surgical preparation and procedure can begin.

Your animal will be induced with a different agent intravenously (into the vein, similar in concept to drawing blood) to allow for general inhaled anesthesia and surgical prep once s/he is relaxed. This agent is a combination of drugs that will allow your animal to be in a deep sleep and also offer pain control.

Once your animal is safely under anesthesia the eyes will be lubricated with artificial tears, s/he will also have a pulse oximeter attached to the tongue, ear, or paw to monitor heart rate and breathing.

**Spay surgery (canine and feline):** The fur on your animal's abdomen (belly) will be shaved, the skin will then be scrubbed with a safe, surgical disinfectant (betadine). The incision will be made on the midline of the abdomen, below the umbilicus (belly button). The ovaries will be located first and the blood vessels will be ligated (tied with suture material) and detached from the body; the uterus can then be ligated and removed. The layers of muscle and skin will be sutured (stitched) using absorbable suture material. Once the incision site has been completely sutured, a small sterile needle is used to deposit a tiny bit of tattoo ink on either side of the incision. The scar left behind once your animal has healed may be quite small and can be difficult to see, the ink will help it to stand out to veterinarians examining the area.

**Neuter surgery (canine):** The fur on and around your animal's scrotum and penis will be shaved and the area will be scrubbed with a safe, surgical disinfectant (betadine). The incision will be made between the scrotum and penis; each testicle will be removed through the same incision. Once exposed, the vessels to the testicle will be ligated (tied with suture material) and the testicle removed. The layers of muscle and skin will be sutured (stitched)

using absorbable suture material. A small amount of tattoo ink may be deposited under the skin parallel to the incision with a small, sterile needle if your animal is not microchipped.

Neuter surgery (feline): The fur on and around your animal's scrotum and penis will be shaved and the skin will then be scrubbed with a safe, surgical disinfectant (betadine). An incision will be made midline on the scrotum and each testicle will be removed through this incision. The vessels to the testicles are tied-off internally and the skin is allowed to heal on its own.

A cap and mask is worn by SVACA's surgeon, as is a sterile gown and sterile surgical gloves. All instruments are scrubbed, disinfected, ultrasonically cleaned and steam sterilized between patients to aid in the prevention of infection, cross contamination and the spread of infectious diseases.

### **General Discharge Information and Instructions**

Your animal has just undergone a surgical procedure that, while routine, causes some degree of stress on the body. By reading, understanding and following these instructions, you can ease the recovery period for your animal as well as your family.

Your animal was given pain control by injection and/or orally prior to discharge. If you feel your animal is in need of additional pain control following surgery, please contact your private veterinarian and be sure to bring the medical record with you to the appointment.

Your animal may be lethargic, inactive, or uncoordinated for the first 24-48 hours after anesthesia. Do not allow them into areas where they might fall or otherwise injure themselves. For dogs, exercise should be limited to 10-15 minute walks while on leash several times throughout the day. If normal activity and coordination do not return within 48 hours, contact your private veterinarian.

If your animal needs to be picked up or lifted for any reason, be sure the hind end of your animal is fully supported to keep pressure off the incision site.

If you plan to have your male dog neutered, please be sure to get an appropriately sized e-collar/cone for him to wear post-operatively. It is common for male dogs to irritate the incision and the surrounding area by licking and chewing. The majority of female dogs do not focus on the incision area in the same way but an e-collar/cone is highly recommended to prevent post-op irritation and infection. Most cats do not focus on the incision site post-operatively but if your animal does s/he should wear an e-collar when not under your direct supervision, these collars are sold by neck size at many pet stores. You should work with staff to ensure that your animal's nose/tongue do not extend beyond the collar and it is resting against the shoulders.

If your animal received vaccinations at surgery, please note that vaccines can have a range of adverse effects. Some animals may exhibit mild symptoms of illness such as sneezing or lethargy, while some may experience systemic reactions. A systemic reaction may present as a fever and/or limping and is usually responsive to pain relievers prescribed by your veterinarian and should resolve in three to four days. An animal showing signs of anaphylactic shock, a serious compromise of the respiratory system, needs to be seen by his/her veterinarian immediately. Some animals may have swelling or hair loss at the injection site (most common), muscle aches or soreness, vomiting and/or diarrhea, and sometimes swelling of the muzzle or “hives” across the body.

Some animals may cough for one or two days following anesthesia; this is common after a breathing tube has been placed. If this persists for more than two days or is accompanied by yellow or green discharge from the eyes or nose, call your private veterinarian.


Anesthetic drugs can cause nausea in some animals. Feeding smaller meals can help settle your animal’s stomach. Please offer a small meal before bedtime and a small meal for breakfast; normal feeding can resume the evening of the day after surgery. If your animal either refuses food or is vomiting after the 24 hours following surgery, you should contact your private veterinarian for follow-up care.

You should observe your animal’s urination and bowel habits. If they are not normal within 24 hours, call your private veterinarian.

Animals, just like people, are more susceptible to disease during times of stress. It is important to keep your animal inside as much as possible, this limits their contact with other animals who may be carriers of disease and keeps them from getting dirt and/or debris in the incision as it is healing.

It is important to keep your animal as calm and quiet as is possible for the five to ten (5-10) day period following surgery. Discourage running, jumping, climbing, as well as any sort of rough play. While this can be a challenge, especially for young animals, it is important for your animal’s health and recovery.

Your animal should not be bathed or go swimming for 10-14 days post-surgery to prevent infection at the incision site.

The suture used is dissolvable and will remain intact for 60 - 90 days under the skin. If it is bothering your animal please call 408-764-0344 or consult with your private veterinarian regarding treatment for inflammation. Please note: the incision made for the neuter of male cats is not sutured. 

Please inspect the surgical incision daily, along the midline of the belly for female dogs and cats, just above the scrotum for male dogs and just below the tail for male cats. The incision

site should scab over as part of the healing process, just like the cuts and scratches we sometimes get. A small amount of swelling and redness is normal but should not persist for more than five days following surgery.

Any discharge or drainage from the incision should be reported to your private veterinarian and your animal may need to be seen by your vet. Some females may develop a walnut-sized lump at the incision site, if you see any seepage or the lump becomes excessively large please call 408-764-0344 or contact your private veterinarian. There will be a small amount of ink on either side of the incision; there is no need to try to remove it.

If you are concerned about your animal's recovery, please call 408-764-0344 or contact your private veterinarian.

In the event you need to seek medical attention after normal business hours, please contact your nearest emergency veterinary clinic.

Please note: you are responsible for veterinary costs incurred if your animal is in need of medical attention.