

# **DISCHARGE INSTRUCTIONS**

## **SURGICAL PROCEDURE**

- Your pet had **major surgery** with general anesthesia, which means he/she was unconscious during the operation.
- In female dogs and cats, the uterus and ovaries are removed through a small incision in the abdominal wall.
- In male dogs and cats, the scrotum is not removed, only the testicles. Male dogs have an incision just above the scrotum. Male cats have an open incision. Male cats may appear as if they still have testicles. This is normal as the scrotum swells slightly after surgery – the swelling should subside gradually through the recovery period.
- All animals receive a small green **tattoo** to the rear of the incision line. This is a universally recognized tattoo that identifies your pet has been spayed or neutered.

## **WHAT TO EXPECT WHEN YOU BRING YOUR PET HOME**

- We strongly recommend you keep your pet confined in a crate or small room in a climate-controlled environment the night after surgery.
- Your pet may be **groggy** when you get home, experiencing a "hang-over" from the anesthesia. Your pet will typically require 18-24 hours to recover from the general anesthesia. Most animals will be back to normal when the anesthesia leaves their system entirely.
- Your pet may sleep much more than normal for 18-24 hours following surgery.
- Your pet may be a little agitated or aggressive due to the after-effects of anesthesia. Avoid handling the animal too much as he/she may try to bite or scratch you.
- **Isolate** the animal from children and other pets. He/she may be more prone to snapping or nipping at other pets and even children due to the after-effects of anesthesia.
- Your pet may have poor balance. This will make climbing stairs or getting in and out of the car more difficult than usual, so be ready to assist. Help your dog in and out of the car as sudden movements can damage the stitches. Lift the dog by wrapping your arms around the dog's chest/front legs and rear/back legs. Avoid putting pressure on their abdomen.
- **Do not give your pet over the counter/human pain medication.** Your pet received pain medication before and during surgery that keeps them comfortable for up to 48 hours. If your pet seems uncomfortable please contact us and we can provide additional prescription pain medication if needed.
- You can offer a small amount of food and water to your pet once they get home, but they may not want to eat; or eat very little.

## **INCISION SITE**

- What the incision looks like on the day of surgery is what we consider normal. A small amount of serous drainage can be normal. A very small amount of redness/swelling at incision may occur.
- If animal allows, **check incision site** once daily for one week. Check for excessive redness, swelling, discharge, blood or if incision site is open.
- If your dog has a belly wrap due to post-surgical bruising, please remove after 24 hours and re-wrap if still bleeding.
- Do not clean or apply any topical ointment to the incision site.
- Do not get incision wet until the skin layer is healed, which is typically 7-10 days.
- Slight opening of the skin layer or scabbing can be normal healing. If concerned please bring these concerns to our attention.

## **SUTURES**

- Unless you are told otherwise, your pet does not have external sutures. If you are told that your pet has skin sutures or skin staples, he/she will need to return in 7-10 days to have those removed.
- All sutures are **absorbable** on the inside. You may feel residual sutures for up to 3 months. This may present as a small lump under the skin. The lump may appear larger in more active pets. The very outer layer of skin is held together with surgical glue.

## **FEEDING**

- Anesthesia tends to make animals experience **nausea**, so your pet may not want to eat when he/she gets home after surgery. Your pet's appetite should return gradually within 24 hours of surgery.
- Offer a small amount of food and water as soon as the animal is fully awake. If vomiting occurs or they are not interested, wait until the next day to give more food. Provide your normal amount of food and water to your pet on the day after surgery.
- Do not change your pet's diet at this time and do not give junk food, table scraps, milk or any other people food for a period of one week. This could mask post-surgical complications.

## **DO NOT ALLOW YOUR PET TO LICK OR BITE THE INCISION**

- **Licking** or biting the incision could cause the wound to re-open and become infected. To keep your pet from licking the incision during the healing process we recommend an E-collar be worn during the recovery period.
- Injuries can result from licking that may result in the need for additional surgeries and/or medications at your expense.

## **IN HEAT/Pregnant**

- If your female dog or cat was in heat at the time of surgery, you must keep her away from un-neutered males for at least two weeks. While she is unable to become pregnant, she will still attract intact males for a short period of time. Being mounted can cause internal injuries.
- If your female was in-heat or pregnant they are at a higher risk of internal bleeding. It is important to keep them quiet and monitor them closely during the recovery period.

## **DEWCLAW REMOVAL**

- If your pet had the rear declaws removed please keep bandages on for 2 days and then remove. Look for swelling in the foot because this could signify that the wrap may be too tight. We want to ensure that there is no bleeding so the wrap will be snug but not snug enough that the foot should swell. Also please keep the cone on for 7-10 days so that the dog does not chew open the incision site.
- There are no sutures to be removed unless states. If the incision starts bleeding, re-wrap lightly.

## **ACTIVITY**

- The healing process takes **7-10 days**.
- Any strenuous activity could disrupt the healing process. This is most commonly seen with scrotal swelling and seromas around spay incisions, or opening of the skin layer.
- Some animals are active after surgery, while others are quiet. It is very important that you limit your pet's activity during the healing process.
- Pets must be kept indoors where they can stay clean, dry, and warm.
- No running, jumping, playing, swimming, or other strenuous activity during the 7-10 day recovery period.
- **Do not bathe** your pet or have it groomed during the recovery period.
- When outdoors dogs should be on a leash and taken for short walks only for next 10 days.
- Non-feral cats should be kept indoors for the next 10 days.
- Keep animal away from all hazards (including stairs).
- If our pet appears lethargic or inappetant, remove e-collar under supervision to see if it perks them up
- Feral Cats should be monitored for at least 24 hours before being released

## **POTENTIAL COMPLICATIONS**

Spaying and neutering are generally safe surgeries; however, complications can and do occur. If you are concerned about your pet, please contact Dehart Veterinary Services, PLLC. (if before 4pm; after 4pm refer to Emergency sheet or contact your regular full-service veterinarian. The following are justification for immediate notification of a veterinarian:

- Pale gums
- Depression or lethargy lasting more than 24 hours post op
- Vomiting lasting past 12 hours post-op
- Decreased appetite lasting past 12 hours post-op
- Difficulty urinating
- Labored breathing
- Malodorous discharge or excessive bleeding from incision

-Dehart Veterinary Services, PLLC. will re-check your pet at no charge at our clinic for any complications resulting directly from surgery. There may be a minimal cost for medication if needed (such as antibiotics) or an e-collar.

-Dehart Veterinary Services, PLLC. cannot be held responsible for complications resulting from failure to follow post-operative instructions or for contagious diseases in post-operative period; as outlined in your surgical release form.

-Your regular veterinarian must address illnesses or injuries that are not a direct result of surgery or when, due to our mobile nature, we are unable to recheck your pet in an appropriate time frame.

-Common complications include scrotal swelling, skin dehiscence, incisional infection, seromas, and suture granulomas. These are non-emergency complications that can be brought to our attention during our business hours. If you go to an emergency room or your regular veterinarian, you are responsible for the cost.

## **Description of surgical procedure performed for owner and full service veterinarian reference.**

### Dogs

After examination dogs are pre-medicated with an appropriate weight dependent dose of acepromazine and morphine via subcutaneous injection. Dogs over the age of 6 years receive a decreased dose of acepromazine.

Induction is performed via intravenous injection of an appropriate weight dependent dose of midazolam and ketamine. The dogs are then intubated.

Dogs are maintained on 1-2% isoflurane during surgery

Dogs then receive a subcutaneous weight dependent dose of meloxicam and penicillin. Eyes are lubricated.

Dogs are then prepped for surgery with aseptic technique.

#### Females –

Bladder is expressed prior to surgery

Ventral midline incision

Ovarian pedicles are exposed and ligated via a Miller's Knot using appropriately sized monocryl absorbable suture

The uterine body is isolated and ligated with up to 3 Miller's Knots (depending on size) using appropriately sized monocryl absorbable suture

The abdominal wall, subcutaneous, and intradermal layers are all closed using appropriately sized monocryl absorbable suture

The skin is reinforced with surgical grade tissue glue

#### Males –

Owners/veterinarians can request a description of cryptorchid procedure when necessary

For dogs over 6 months of age a pre-scrotal approach is taken

Each testicle is exposed and ligated via two Miller Knots

The subcutaneous and intradermal layers are closed

The skin is reinforced with surgical grade tissue glue

For dogs under 6 months old a scrotal approach is taken

Each testicle is removed through one central incision and ligated via instrument tie

### Cats

After examination cats receive a weight dependent intramuscular dose of a mixture of dexmedetomidine, ketamine and buprenorphine. This serves as premedication and induction.

Cats then receive subcutaneous injections of weight dependent doses of penicillin and meloxicam. Eyes are lubricated.

Cats are then prepped for surgery with aseptic technique. After surgery the cat's dosage of dexmedetomidine is reversed with atipamezole.

#### Females –

Bladder is expressed prior to surgery

Ventral midline incision

Ovarian pedicles are exposed and ligated via instrument tie

The uterine body is ligated via 1-2 Miller Knots using 2-0 monocryl absorbable suture

The abdominal wall, subcutaneous, and intradermal layers are all closed using appropriately sized monocryl absorbable suture

The skin is reinforced with surgical grade tissue glue  
Males –  
Each testicle is removed through one medial scrotal incision and ligated via instrument tie

### **EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION**

Given our mobile nature we are not able to provide veterinary care in the event of an emergency after surgery once we have left the location for the day. If you have general questions or concerns after surgery you may call/text Dehart Veterinary Services at 903-590-7722. If after 4p the call may be answered the following day. If your pet is experiencing a true emergency (excessive tiredness, collapse, excessive bleeding, excessive vomiting, etc.) please contact the veterinary facility located nearest you. Please bear in mind that not all areas have veterinarians that will see emergencies.

### **Rechecks**

- Dehart Veterinary Services, PLLC. will re-check your pet at no charge at our clinic for any complications resulting directly from surgery. There may be a minimal cost for medication if needed (such as antibiotics) or an e-collar.
- Due to our mobile nature you are expected to come to one of our locations in order to have your pet rechecked.
- If you take your pet to be rechecked by your regular veterinarian you will have to be responsible for the cost, as outlined in the surgery release form you signed prior to surgery. Please follow up with us or have your regular veterinarian forward your pet's medical records to us for review.
- Dehart Veterinary Services, PLLC. cannot be held responsible for complications resulting from failure to follow post-operative instructions or for contagious diseases in post-operative period; as outlined in your surgical release form.
- Please refer to your regular veterinarian to address illnesses or injuries that are not a direct result of surgery or when, due to our mobile nature