Post-Operative Care Instructions

PET SHOULD BE GIVEN PAIN MEDICATION REGARDLESS OF WHETHER PET APPEARS TO BE IN PAIN

*Animals cover their pain but have the same pain pathways as humans.*

*Reproductive, and some other surgeries, are as painful for animals as repairing a broken leg would be for humans.*

**ALL PATIENTS**

**Post-surgery to following morning:**
- Patient should be allowed to recover in a calm and relaxed setting.
- Patient may be sleepy or off-balance.
- Patient should avoid exposure to children, other pets and/or stairs.
- Patient may be grouchy or confused in reaction to coming out of anesthesia, despite normal personality.
- Patient should be provided with water and a half portion of typical night feeding amount.
  - Patient may not be hungry first night, but should recover appetite within next few days.
- Dog should only be allowed outside for toileting and should be monitored to reduce chance of infection.
- House-cat should NOT be allowed outside for 7-10 days.
- Feral cat should be allowed to recover indoors until the morning following surgery.
  - Cat needs time to heal and allow drugs to leave system to be able to properly defend self outdoors.
- Patient may cough over next few days in reaction to having had a tracheal tube inserted during surgery.

**First morning after surgery:**
- Provide the first dose of pain medication on the morning following surgery

**CAT NEUTER RECOVERY INSTRUCTIONS**
- No sutures are placed when male cats are neutered; instead 2 small slits are made over the scrotum.
- Most are fully recovered the day following surgery and do not need e-collars.
- Call to schedule a re-check if your cat is constantly licking at his scrotum and/or has swelling or bleeding.

**DOG NEUTER RECOVERY INSTRUCTIONS**
- Dissolvable sutures are buried under skin making suture removal unnecessary.
- Do not bathe patient for 10 days following surgery as it is very important to not get incision wet.
- Most patients fully recover from surgery within 1 – 2 days, but some may appear less energetic for 3 or 4 days.
- In order to greatly reduce likelihood of infection, please do the following:
  - Appropriate wear of E-Collar **greatly reduces** chance of infection and/or re-opening of sutures and chance of a 2nd surgery becoming necessary.
  - Protect patient from reaching his incision by keeping E-Collar on for 7 – 10 days.
  - Patient should not be able to reach his nose past end of E-Collar.
- Call to schedule a re-check if your dog’s incision becomes swollen, appears to open or have a discharge.
- If scrotum looks to be filling up, like he had not been neutered, patient **needs to be seen as soon as possible.**
CAT/DOG SPAY RECOVERY INSTRUCTIONS

- Dissolvable sutures are buried under skin making suture removal unnecessary.
- Do not bathe patient for 10 days following surgery as it is very important to not get incision wet.
- Most patients fully recover from surgery within 1 – 2 days, but some may appear less energetic for 3 or 4 days.
- Check patient’s incision daily. Some swelling is expected over the first 2 days, but should not continue. If swelling continues past two days, call to schedule a recheck.
- Incision should stay completely closed. If it appears to be opening, is open, is draining any discolored discharge or smells, please call to schedule a recheck.
- It is normal for female dogs which were in heat at time of spay to have some bloody vaginal discharge for a few days following surgery.

CRYPTORCHID NEUTER RECOVERY INSTRUCTIONS

- Cryptorchid patients may have 1 or 2 incisions. Second testicle will be removed from closest location possible.
- Start antibiotics AND pain medication morning after surgery.
- Male cryptorchids are the most common type of surgery to have aftercare problems and/or require 2nd surgery.
  - Appropriate wear of E-Collar substantially reduces chance of infection and/or re-opening of sutures.
  - Protect patient from reaching his incision by keeping E-Collar on for 7 – 10 days.
  - Patient should not be able to reach his nose past end of E-Collar.
  - Failing to require patient to wear E-Collar can result in additional pain for your dog and possibly an additional surgery.
- Call to schedule a re-check if your dog’s incision becomes swollen, appears to open or have a discharge.
- If scrotum looks to be filling up, like he had not been neutered, patient needs to be seen as soon as possible.

UMBILICAL HERNIAS

- Incision will be over “belly button” separate from spay/neuter incision. Incision rarely appears to bother patient.
- Dissolvable sutures are buried under skin making suture removal unnecessary.

DEWCLAW REMOVALS

- Start antibiotics AND pain medication morning after surgery.
- Recovering from dewclaw removals is typically very uncomfortable for patient.
- It is VERY, VERY important for patient to be prevented from licking at incision(s).
  - Sutures are easy to reach if E-Collar not worn and most patients will destroy sutures if given opportunity. As a result, the following preventive measures are taken to reduce likelihood of negative outcome:
    - E-collar must be worn for 7 – 10 days.
    - Foot/Feet wrapped to make it more difficult for patient to irritate incision(s).
    - Antibiotic schedule is completed.
  - Bandage Follow Up
    - If bandage gets wet or dirty, remove it. A wet, dirty bandage can cause infection instead of prevent it.
    - Remove bandage IMMEDIATELY if foot/feet appear(s) swollen as swelling can mean bandage is too tight and circulation is being cut off to healing area.
- Schedule appointment for suture/bandage removal 10 – 14 days following surgery.

DENTAL CLEANINGS

- Most patients fully recover from surgery within 1 – 2 days, but some may appear tired.
- Regular feeding may continue as before.

DENTAL EXTRACTIONS (Pulled Teeth)

- Start antibiotics AND/OR pain medication morning after surgery, if either or both have been provided.
- Most pets continue to eat normally. Many feel and eat better after having bad teeth removed.
- If teeth are pulled to the degree patient has very few left, food changes must be discussed with the veterinarian to ensure any special dietary needs/modifications are addressed.