



Post-Operative Instructions for Cats

What should I do when my cat arrives home after its operation?

After arriving home, you should keep your pet warm and comfortable by providing a soft clean bed, ideally in a quiet and draft-free room at approximately 68 -72°F (20 –22°C). Unless otherwise instructed, your cat should be given ample fresh water. After a few hours, a small amount of food may be given. Please keep your cat indoors overnight, or longer if instructed, and allow the use of a litter tray. You should discourage any jumping or activity that will cause excessive stretching of the wound, especially during the first few days post-operatively.

My cat seems very sleepy, is this normal?

Your cat has been given a general anesthetic or a sedative. These drugs can take a number of hours to wear off and may cause some patients to appear drowsy for a day or so. Over the next day or two their behavior should return to normal, however if you are at all concerned, do not hesitate to contact the hospital.

Why has my cat's foreleg been shaved?

This is usually where the anesthetic or sedative was administered. Additionally, many cats receive fluids through an intravenous catheter and the arm must be clipped to place the catheter. There may also be a small dressing or bandage on the leg. If so, this can be removed the following day unless otherwise instructed.



My cat has developed a slight cough since the operation. Is this anything to worry about?

Your cat may have had a tube placed in their trachea (windpipe) during anesthesia. This can occasionally cause mild irritation and a slight cough. If so, the cough will diminish over the next few days; however, should it persist or worsen, contact the hospital.

What should I do if my cat is licking its wound or chewing the stitches?

It is only natural that your cat may try to clean the operation site by licking. If this becomes excessive, there is a danger of the stitches being pulled out or infection being introduced into the wound. If you have been given an Elizabethan-type protective collar to prevent the cat chewing, please ensure it is used. If not, contact the hospital and ask for a E-collar. Not surprisingly, many cats find these collars strange at first and will attempt to remove them. However, after a short period most pets will settle down and tolerate wearing the collar. Once accustomed, it is better to keep the collar on all the time, rather than to take it on and off. It only

takes a few seconds of unobserved chewing for a cat to undo its stitches or damage the surgery site. If your cat does succeed in removing any of its stitches then please call the hospital as soon as possible.

What should the incision look like, and when should I be concerned?

The incision should normally be clean with the edges together and the skin a normal or slightly reddish-pink color. In pale skinned cats, bruising is often seen around the surgical site. This may not appear until a few days after the operation and in some cases can seem excessive in comparison to the size of the incision. This is due to seepage of blood under the skin edges and is normal. In some cases a small amount of blood may seep intermittently from a fresh incision for up to twenty-four hours, especially if the animal is active.

Please contact the hospital if you see any of the following at the surgical site:

1. Continuous drainage, seepage or a large quantity of blood.
2. Intermittent blood seepage continuing for more than twenty-four hours.
3. Any swellings, excessive redness of the skin or discharge.

When do the stitches need removing?

In general, most skin stitches or *sutures* are removed seven to fourteen days after the operation depending on the type of surgery performed. You will be instructed when is the most appropriate time for your cat.

When can my cat resume normal activities?

This will depend upon the type of operation your cat underwent. In the case of a minor procedure involving a small incision, some restriction of exercise should be maintained until a few days after the skin stitches are removed. However, if major operation has been performed or a large incision is present a longer period of convalescence will be required, which may involve keeping your cat house-bound for a number of weeks. Your veterinarian will give you detailed instructions on how long you should restrict your cat's activities following surgery.

If you have been given any medication:

Please **READ THE LABEL CAREFULLY** and ensure that all medication is administered as instructed. If you are experiencing any difficulty in treating your cat, please contact the hospital for advice.