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Preparing Your Pet for Anesthesia

Anesthesia is the use of medications to cause a very controlled slowing of the brain and body to prevent movement, reaction, and the sensation of pain. It is used to perform surgical procedures on dogs and cats. Obviously, there are inherent risks involved whenever a patient is put under anesthesia. There are many things we as veterinary professionals do to try to reduce a patient's risk of complications while they are under anesthesia. This may include using different drug protocols, special monitoring, pre and post anesthesia treatments, etc.

There are also many things you as the pet owner can do to help your pet prepare and recover from anesthesia.

DOCTOR EXAM

Examination by a veterinarian is recommended before scheduling a surgery. This limits variables the day of surgery. We can determine if the procedure, timing, and recovery care is right for you and your pet before you prepare finances and arrange your schedule. We can provide you with an estimate before surgery so you know what you are getting into financially. As always, payment is due at the time of service. We can schedule send out blood work which gives us more information for less cost. We can also discuss possible risks, complications, and aftercare to help you prepare for your pet's procedure.

RISK VS BENEFIT

The veterinarian always weighs risk vs benefit when recommending a procedure that requires anesthesia. This is a very important discussion to have with your veterinarian when considering any surgery. If the pet has an underlying disease that increases their risk of dying under anesthesia … will the pet's quality of life be improved enough by the procedure to risk the anesthesia? The pet seems completely healthy … do we absolutely need to perform the procedure in order to protect the pet's future health?

BLOOD TESTING

Blood work is recommended for EVERY pet that is going to be put under anesthesia. You always have the right to refuse a recommendation so long as you accept the risk. We will never pressure you, only explain why we recommend a service.

Blood work tells us a lot about how your pet's organs are functioning. Blood results give an idea of the overall health of the patient. The results will help the doctor predict how the kidneys and liver will process drugs and if the patient can handle the low blood pressure associated with anesthesia.

There is long term value in pre-anesthesia blood work. The results can be used to compare future lab results. If a patient becomes sick or as they age and we start to compile annual senior blood work, all of the results can be compared. We can track trends and catch diseases earlier.

The body is highly adaptive and blood work can change within days. We recommend having blood work done a maximum of 2 weeks prior to anesthesia. Same day blood work is the best but is also more expensive. Send out blood work also gives us the benefit of a few days' notice of abnormal results before the surgery appointment.

Blood Testing Options:

1). Send the blood sample out to Zoetis Labs.
- ♥ Scheduled blood draw performed 10-14 days prior to anesthesia/surgery appointment.
- ♥ CBC, Chem25, and Thyroid

2). In clinic, same day testing.
- ♥ CBC and Chem14
- ♥ Smaller panel but similar to send out labs.

3). In clinic, same day testing.
- ♥ PCV and Chem10
- ♥ Fewest tests, okay for very healthy younger animals.

OTHER TESTS

In some cases, x-rays, ultrasound, and/or a urinalysis may be recommended before anesthesia. Specialized blood testing may rule out concern for underlying disease. Occasionally, a referral to a specialist may be best for certain pets before scheduling anesthesia.

OTHER MEDICATIONS

We highly recommend pre-operative anti-nausea medication for EVERY patient. "Cerenia" is an injectable medication that lasts 24 hours. It reduces nausea and prevents vomiting before and after anesthesia. It also protects the lower esophagus from reflux damage as well as the lungs from aspiration pneumonia.

We highly recommend anti-inflammatory pain medication be sent home after EVERY surgical procedure. This will keep your pet comfortable and improve healing as well as speeding healing time so your pet (and you) can get back to their normal routine faster.

As always, you have the right to refuse a recommendation so long as you accept the risk.

HOME PREPARATION

Keeping a pet healthy through anesthesia, surgery, and the recovery process takes the whole team. You are a big part of your pet's health team!

The day before surgery …

- ♥ For healthy pets:
    - Allow free access to fresh, clean water at all times. We don't want your pet to be dehydrated during anesthesia and recovery.
    - DO NOT feed your pet after midnight the night before surgery -not even treats. We do not want your pet to aspirate its stomach contents -this can be fatal. *We will not perform surgery on a pet that has eaten after midnight the night before surgery.*
    - Keep your pet somewhere safe where you can control their food and water intake as well as easily catch them to bring them in for their appointment.
    - Bring a favorite blanket or toy with your pet for their stay with us.
    - Leave all pet clothes at home to prevent loss and/or damage.
    - Please take your pet potty before entering the clinic -they will be far more comfortable for their surgery prep.
- ♥ For pets with underlying health concerns:
    - Please call our office *several days* BEFORE your surgery appointment to determine the best preparation for your pet. (For example: Diabetic patients should be given only half a meal and their regular dose of insulin the morning of surgery.)
    - ALWAYS tell the nurse and doctor what medications and supplements your pet is being given and when their last dose was given.
- ♥ PLEASE CALL, TEXT, and/or EMAIL the clinic with ANY questions about preparing your pet for their big surgery day. We have your pet's best interest at heart! It is our goal to keep your pet safe and stress free while they are with us.

After anesthesia/surgery …

- ♥ Most pets will be sent home the evening after surgery. Surgery is performed between 10am and 2pm giving them the afternoon to recover with us. If the doctor is happy with their vitals and attitude, she will send them home around 4:30pm. Some pets may be kept overnight for further monitoring.
- ♥ You should be given a handout about your pet's surgery when you check out. If you did not receive a handout, please let us know!
- ♥ Pets may be groggy or want to nap when they get home. This is okay but should not be severe. Bring your pet to a quiet, calm, warm area once you get home. Allow them to continue to recover through the evening with close monitoring and a stress-free environment.
- ♥ Pets should be allowed access to fresh, clean water as soon as they get home. However, monitor them closely for over-drinking or clumsiness around their water dish. We do not want them to inhale water or become wet and cold.
- ♥ Offer a small, easy to digest meal at their regular dinner time. If your pet does not want to eat or only eats a little that is expected. Do not stress them by forcing them to eat.
- ♥ Keep your pet rested. Leash walk them outside to go potty before bedtime.

- ♥ Your pet should be back to normal by the morning after anesthesia/surgery. If you have any concerns about how they are recovering from anesthesia please call the clinic! If it is after hours, call an emergency clinic.

Thank you for trusting us with your pet's surgical needs.

"We love to love your pets!"

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