

Post-Op Instructions

KEEP THE CAT WARM UNTIL FULLY AWAKE!!!

1. **Keep the cat in its carrier or trap until it can move around normally.** Its coordination is hindered by anesthesia, so it will not be able to jump or climb normally until the anesthesia fully wears off.
2. **Keep the carrier or trap in a warm, dry, draft-free and sheltered area where you can check on it frequently.** Cats that are not fully recovered from anesthesia are at risk of hypothermia (dangerously low body temperature) **which could make the cat become re-anesthetized and perhaps die. On the other hand, cats may also become overheated if left in a warm car or in the sun. Bottom line, anesthesia inhibits the cat's ability to moderate their body temperature.**
 - a. While the cat is still drowsy, keep the carrier or trap in a room that is as warm as possible, ideally near 85 degrees.
 - b. Cover the carrier or trap with sheets, towels or blankets to trap; warm air and preserve body heat.
3. **Water and food:**
 - a. If the cat is alert and you have safe access, provide water in a way that it won't spill and get the bedding wet. The cat does not need water if it is eating canned food.
 - b. For cats over 4 pounds: Provide canned food when the cat is fully awake.
For cats/kittens less than 4 pounds: Provide a small amount (1 tablespoon) of canned food as soon as the cat is awake enough to eat safely. Provide additional canned food (approximately ½ the amount of a normal meal) two or three hours later.
4. **Normal surgery reactions:**
 - a. Eartips: Following an eartip, bleeding is expected.
 - b. Males: Expect slight bleeding from the scrotum of a neutered male for the first 24 hours. Larger toms may have more significant bleeding but should not require treatment.
 - c. Females: Many female cats develop a sterile suture reaction. This appears as a bump at the incision site **DAYS** after surgery. This is caused by the body breakdown/resorbing the absorbable suture.
5. **Safely observe the cat for the following problems:**
 - a. Failure to stay awake.
 - b. Difficult breathing.
 - c. Slow recovery. The cat should be able to move around by 10 p.m.
 - d. Excessive bleeding from the incision (below the tail for males, on the belly for females).
 - e. Any abnormalities (swelling, redness, smelly discharge) at the incision site. (See section 4 above for exception.)
6. **Safe release:** Unless otherwise instructed or noted on the medical record, release the cat the day after surgery. The ideal confinement period is one week, but **ONLY** if the cat can be kept safely inside for a longer time without becoming a threat to you or itself. Cats must be judged individually--stress may hinder recovery, so release may be preferable for some cats rather than keeping them in for a week after surgery.