



Anesthesia: What to Expect

General anesthesia means that “YOUR PET” will be given a combination of medications that reduce pain and anxiety, followed by drugs that cause unconsciousness. Once unconscious, a breathing tube is placed in the trachea and oxygen and anesthetic gas are given by inhalation.

State of the art support for anesthetized patients includes:

- Monitoring vital signs, such as EKG, blood pressure, respiration, and end-tidal CO₂.
- Current and comprehensive pain management techniques.
- Anesthesia technicians with special expertise and training.
- Specialized body temperature maintenance systems.

Before you bring “YOUR PET” in for anesthesia, please understand the following:

- To help avoid complications, “YOUR PET” should NOT have any food in the morning prior to anesthesia.
- You MAY offer “YOUR PET” water.
- Bring any medications “YOUR PET” is currently taking so that we can continue to give these if needed.
- You SHOULD walk “YOUR PET” as usual in the morning, prior to admission.
- If we have instructed you to change “YOUR PET”’s medication schedule (i.e. lower insulin dose or to withhold a particular drug), write yourself a note so you remember early in the morning.

When “YOUR PET” is admitted to our hospital for anesthesia:

- We ask you about medications you are currently giving, phone numbers so we can reach you for updates, and discuss your preferences in case of emergency. Please plan to allow approximately fifteen minutes to complete the check-in process.
- If we feel “YOUR PET” has any potential increased risk of complications due to anesthesia—because of breed, age or disease—we will discuss this with you.
- “YOUR PET” will be given a comfortable place to rest and will be monitored closely.
- We will call you when “YOUR PET” is being prepared for surgery and again once “YOUR PET” is awake from anesthesia. You may also receive an intra-op call to discuss the results of the dental radiographs and anesthetized exam.

So you don't worry:

- We check "YOUR PET"'s vital signs and lab results and design an individualized anesthesia plan tailored to "YOUR PET"'s age, health, degree of anxiety, and need for pain medication.
- Medical checklists ensure that all steps of patient care have been correctly met and help eliminate the risk of errors.
- Teams of highly trained veterinarians and veterinary technicians monitor "YOUR PET"'s condition and comfort, night and day.
- "YOUR PET" will benefit from our dedication to pain management. Generally two or more types of pain medications, including local anesthetic injections, are used. This is similar to pain management methods in human oral surgery.

What to expect when "YOUR PET" comes home:

- It is important to realize that being in the hospital can be stressful. We may give "YOUR PET" sedatives to help with relaxation and sleep during their stay with us. Despite this, not every pet sleeps well when away from home. Once home, "YOUR PET" may want to nap more than usual for a day or two. This is normal.
- The best way to help "YOUR PET" recover is to provide a calm, low stimulus location near a comforting family member. Avoid over-exertion and feed smaller meals than normal. If "YOUR PET" has sutures in place, a soft diet will be necessary. If "YOUR PET" won't eat the first evening at home, that is OK, but appetite should return within the first 24 hours.
- "YOUR PET" may not have a bowel movement for up to 48 to 72 hours. This is because anesthesia and some medications slow down the GI tract. Do not worry unless "YOUR PET" is straining to defecate, not eating, or vomiting. If this is the case, please let us know immediately.

How to tell whether "YOUR PET" is comfortable after surgery:

- "YOUR PET" should be able to sleep in a relaxed position. Restlessness can be due to pain, but some medications can also cause unsettled behavior.
- "YOUR PET" should be glad to see you when you come home or offer some close companionship. If "YOUR PET" seems dull or disinterested, or actively shies away from you, this could indicate that "YOUR PET" is feeling more pain than we would like.
- Vocalizations such as repetitive whining are often due to side effects of medications. Sometimes switching medications helps. If "YOUR PET" cries out when eating or changing positions, more pain medication may be necessary.

If you have any concerns about YOUR PET's pain level or well-being, either before or after surgery, please call us at 757-935-9111.