

Caring for your pet after surgery

Keep your pet warm on its journey home. At home your pet should be left in a warm, quiet area until it is fully recovered. Do not take your dog for a walk for at least 24 hours - just let your dog out in the garden on a lead to relieve itself. Likewise with cats keep in for 24 hours. Try to keep your pet quiet because any sudden movements may put a strain on the stitches and minimum exercise until its stitches have been removed or follow the specific instructions. Your Vet may prescribe some medication to keep your dog comfortable and prevent infection. Many owners find it helpful to draw up a chart and tick off each dose when it is given so that nothing is forgotten.

Your Vet will usually like to check your pet's progress 2-4 days after the operation as a normal routine. Stitches will usually require removal at 10-14 days after the operation. Sometimes the sutures may be under the skin surface and not require removal but the Vet will usually still like to check your pet 2-4 days after the operation.

It is quite common for your pet to appear 'groggy' for a few hours after a general anaesthetic and it may sleep longer and more deeply than normal. Your pet may be a little unsteady on its feet. Provide water and if your pet is hungry it may be given a small meal when you get home. Occasionally, your pet may feel sick and may vomit. If this happens give it water (small amounts little and often) but do not feed it for 24 hours. A tube is put down your pet's throat during the anaesthetic to help it breathe, and occasionally this irritates the windpipe and may cause it to cough or have a sore throat for a few days.

Your pet may have an Elizabethan Collar on to stop getting to its wound, and it may take a little while getting used to it especially moving around the house. It should not be allowed outside wearing an Elizabethan Collar unless under complete control at all times. Elizabethan Collars are available on request if you feel your pet may need one.

Wounds heal faster if they are kept clean and dry and left open to the air. If a wound is bandaged keep the bandage clean and dry and always stop your pet if you see them licking their stitches, bandage or their wound and if necessary use an Elizabethan Collar.

If your pet is still dull or moving unsteadily when it has been home for 24 hours you should call your Vet for advice. If the stitches have come out or split, or if there are any other problems that you are unsure about such as, prolonged retching or vomiting or signs of swelling, discharges or bleeding from the operation wound, contact your Vet for advice.