

Consumer Guide to Elective Surgery

Thank you for recognizing the need to spay (a complete ovariohysterectomy) or neuter (a castration) your pet. Many people “shop around” for the best price on this surgery, without the knowledge of why the cost varies among veterinary practices. This guide was put together to help you find the best fit between the veterinary practice and your expectations for the care of your pet.

Questions to Ask and Why to Ask Them

- **Will preanesthetic blood tests be done prior to anesthesia?**

Before giving an anesthetic to a patient, it is extremely important to make certain that the pet's liver, kidneys and internal organs are functioning optimally to ensure less risk from the procedure. Only a short period of time is required to complete these tests that offer increased safety for your pet during it's anesthetic and surgical procedure.

- **Will my pet receive a complete physical examination prior to surgery?**

This is important for a number of reasons. It is our first defense against performing surgery on an animal that may have infectious disease, a heart murmur, or be debilitated from parasites. Will preanesthetic blood tests be done prior to anesthesia?

- **What safety precautions will be taken with my pet during surgery?**

While most surgery is uneventful, emergencies sometimes arise. Early detection of impending problems greatly aids our ability to intervene and correct the problem. A breathing tube should be placed on all anesthetized animals. This keeps the airway open and allows for supplemental oxygen or gas anesthesia as needed. An oxygen monitor allows the surgeon to keep track of the amount of oxygen in the blood.

The practice should also have a “crash box” handy, which contains emergency drugs and supplies.

- **What safety precautions will be taken with my pet after surgery?**

Surgery patients lose body heat through anesthesia and the opening of body cavities. If patients get too cold, the heart can be affected. Patient temperature should be monitored at regular intervals after surgery and supplemental heating provided as needed. Your pet's gum color, pulse, and respiration should also be monitored.

- **How will pain be controlled for my pet?**

This is very important - **surgery hurts!** The anesthetic will not provide pain control once the pet wakes up. Oral pain control medication should be offered.

- **Will I receive written post-surgical care instructions for my pet?**

Aftercare of surgical patients is very important for proper healing. The hospital should provide written discharge instructions for your pet.