

# ***After Surgery Instructions***

## **Limit Activity**

Some animals are active after surgery, while others remain quiet for a while. Either way, it is very important that you limit your pet's movements during the 10-day recovery period, as strenuous activity, such as running, jumping, or playing, could disrupt the healing process and even cause the incision to become swollen or open. To help keep your pet from being too active:

Place your pet in an adequately sized carrier, kennel, crate or small room when you're not able to supervise him/her. The animal must be able to stand up and turn around in the housing unit.

If your pet is small, carry him/her up and down stairs.

Walk your pet on-leash to allow him/her to urinate/defecate.

Do not take your pet for long walks or allow him/her to roughhouse with other animals or people. Also, do not allow your pet to jump on or off furniture.

To limit your cat's activity, as well as help them feel safe and comfortable, place them in a quiet, confined area such as a bathroom, laundry room, or kitchen. This provides a safe hiding place for them, where you can easily monitor their recovery. Remember to provide fresh food and water and a clean litter box.

## **Keep Them to a Regular Diet**

Give your pet a half-size meal when you bring them home, and then feed them their normal evening meal. Puppies and kittens may have an additional meal through the day. Water should always be available.

Do not change your pet's diet at this time, and do not give them junk food, table scraps, milk, or any other "people food" for seven days. Changes in their diet could hide post-surgical complications. Although patients' reactions to surgery can vary, lethargy (lasting for more than 24 hours after surgery), severe diarrhea, or severe vomiting are NOT normal, and you should contact us immediately if these occur. We can then assess if your pet needs to be examined by a medical professional.

If your pet has an e-collar, do not remove it for feeding unless you are able to supervise them. If you do remove it for feeding, replace it immediately after your pet is finished eating. This is especially important in adult dog neuters. Adult dogs are very susceptible to post-surgical complications, due to excessive licking and chewing of the surgical site.

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## **Keep Their Incision Dry**

Dogs and female cats have internal sutures that provide strength to the tissue as they heal; these will dissolve after approximately four months. Surgical glue has also been applied to the skin to seal the incision against bacterial penetration. Male cats do not have any sutures, and, unless you are told otherwise, your pet does not have external sutures. If you are told that your pet has skin sutures or skin staples, they will need to return in 7–10 days to have those removed.

Do not bathe your pet during the recovery period or apply topical ointment to the incision site—the surgical glue on the incision will dissolve too quickly if it becomes wet. Pets must be kept indoors where they can stay clean, dry, and warm, although dogs can be walked on a leash to urinate/defecate.

## **Check Their Incision Twice Daily**

Female dogs and cats have a mid-line incision in their abdomen. Male dogs and cats have an incision near or on the scrotum. Check these incision sites at least twice daily. What you see when we discharge your pet is what we consider normal.

There should be minimal drainage/discharge/odor in females, and redness and swelling should be minimal. Male dogs may have small amounts of drainage/discharge for up to three days. Male cats may appear as if they still have testicles; this is normal, and the swelling should subside gradually through the recovery period. If there are any bumps or bruises present, they should decrease in size and appearance through the recovery period.

Do not allow your pet to lick or chew at the incision. Licking may cause the incision to become infected or open, which will likely require follow-up visits at a veterinary clinic at considerable cost. If this occurs, we recommend you purchase an e-collar, which prevents them from being able to reach the area. You can purchase an e-collar at AlterClinic for a nominal fee, or at the veterinary clinic or pet store of your choice. If your pet is still able to lick the surgery site after purchasing an e-collar, choose a larger collar or call us for help. This is particularly important with male dogs. Licking and chewing of the surgical site is the number one surgical complication in adult male dogs.

## **Monitor Their Pain Levels**

Our veterinarians employ a multi-modal pain management protocol—this means that different pain medications are administered before, during, and after surgery. If your pet appears to be in pain after getting home, please call our clinic at the following:

During office hours: 234-804-3064

After hours press 5 for afterhours assistance

Our staff can assess if your pet needs to be examined. Do not give human medication to your pet – it is dangerous and can be fatal.

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## **Keep In-Heat Females Away from Males**

Keep neutered males away from un-spayed females. Neutered males can get an un-spayed female pregnant for up to 30 days after spay/neuter surgery. Keep spayed females away from unneutered males for seven days. Animals returning from the clinic may also smell different to other animals in the household. This can cause the animals to fight, so be prepared to keep your pets in separate areas for a few days following surgery.

## **Look Out for Complications**

Spaying and neutering are both very safe surgeries; however, as with all surgery, complications can occur. Minimal redness and swelling of the surgery site should resolve within several days, but if they persist longer, please contact us. You should also contact us immediately if you notice any of the following:

- Pale gums
- Depression
- Unsteady gait
- Loss of appetite or decreased water intake
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Discharge or bleeding from the incision
- Difficulty urinating or defecating
- Labored breathing

AlterClinic will treat at our clinic, during the 10-day recovery period, at minimal cost, any post-operative complications resulting directly from the surgery, if the above post-operative instructions have been followed in full. Your regular veterinarian must address illnesses or injuries that are not a direct result of surgery. Please call for an appointment as soon as you see cause for concern. We cannot be held responsible for complications resulting from failure to follow post-operative instructions, or from contagious diseases for which the animal was not previously properly vaccinated.

Always monitor your pet's urine for blood – a small amount may be present in female animals during the first 24-48 hours after surgery. If this continues or occurs at other times, please call us or call your regular veterinarian, as your pet may have a bladder infection unrelated to surgery.

## **Call if You Have Concerns**

If you have any questions or concerns directly related to the surgery during the 10-day recovery period, please call us at the following:

During office hours: 234-804-3064

After hours press 5 for afterhours assistance

Prior to seeking any post-surgical veterinary care for your pet, you must contact us.