

What to Expect During Surgery

Making the appointment

Please call our office at 540-710-7111 to schedule an appointment for a pre-surgical exam. At this appointment we will perform a full physical exam, run pre-surgical blood work, make an accurate estimate, and prescribe any necessary medications.

Why is a pre-surgical exam important?

1. Heart and lung problems: If your pet has a heart murmur or other cardiovascular problems, it can affect anesthesia. For some pets, if their heart problem is too severe, surgery is not recommended.
 - a. Pre-surgical ECG may be required for pets with heart conditions.
2. Run pre-surgical bloodwork: Blood work results can affect what type of anesthetic or IV fluids we use. Sometimes the results are so serious that we do not recommend performing surgery. When this is discovered the day-of-surgery, it can be inconvenient for pet parents who have taken off of work for the surgery day.
 - a. Liver and kidney function: these organs are the body's filters and if they are not working properly, we want to use a different kind of anesthesia and administer IV fluids before, during, and after surgery to help the liver and kidneys flush it out.
 - b. Blood sugar: Diabetes can prevent healing, so it is important to know if a patient has diabetes before surgery. Also, precautions need to be taken during surgery to monitor blood sugar.
 - c. Electrolytes: If these are too low, we would give a different kind of IV fluids during surgery.
 - d. Packed Cell Volume & Total Protein: This can tell us if your pet is dehydrated and can indicate bleeding problems.
 - e. Heartworm test: Heartworm disease can cause serious complications during surgery
3. Making an accurate estimate: Many factors influence the cost of surgery that are nearly impossible to tell over the phone. For this reason, we cannot guarantee accurate estimates before performing a physical exam.
 - a. *Example*: A growth removal's cost is influenced on where the growth is located on the pet (flat surface or maybe in the armpit), how large it is (a small wart or a baseball), what kind of growth it is (benign, malignant), and whether or not we are sending a sample out for biopsy.
 - b. *Example*: A dental prophylaxis's cost is influenced on how long it will take to clean all the teeth (how much tartar is on the

teeth), how many teeth may need to be extracted (pulled), how many teeth may need to be drilled to be removed (molars), and if any dental suturing is required.

- c. *Example:* A routine spay's cost is influenced by the pet's weight, body condition score (normal or overweight), the age, and whether or not she is in heat.
4. Prescribe medications: For surgeries, like dental prophylaxes, where antibiotics are needed, it is best to start these a few days before the procedure. We can also give an antibiotic injection the day-of-surgery, but this is generally more expensive than giving oral medication.

However, we understand making a separate pre-surgical exam appointment before surgery is not ideal for everyone. Our staff is also happy to examine your pet, run pre-surgical blood work and perform surgery all on the same day!

Before Surgery

Directions: Please see the bottom of this page for our location and directions.

What to bring:

- Paperwork: For your convenience, you may download and fill out our [forms](#) before your appointment. This will save time during patient admission. When scheduling your appointment, please ask the receptionist which forms are needed for your pet's procedure.
- Medical records: If they could not be faxed to us ahead of time.
- Medications your pet is taking
- Food: A small amount of your pet's regular food to give after surgery
- Pet's Personal Items: If you want to bring your pet's favorite toy or blanket please do. Whatever will make your pet's surgery less stressful ☺

Confirmation:

You will receive a phone call the day before your appointment to confirm and remind you to withhold food and water the night before surgery. We have a fair ["No-Show" Policy](#) which is enforced, so please be sure to call us at least 2 hours prior to your appointment if you need to reschedule to avoid being charged a non-cancellation fee.

The Night Before:

Please feed your pet dinner the evening before surgery, but no food or water should be given after 12 midnight before surgery. Be sure to pick

up food and water bowls and remove any food or garbage cans your pet could get into.

Exceptions:

1. Pets on medications that need to be taken before surgery (i.e. antibiotics) can have their medication with a **small bite** of food (not a full meal!) around 4:00-5:00 am the morning of surgery. *Please feel free to call us the day before if you aren't sure whether to give a medication the morning of surgery.*
2. Small pets (under 15 lbs) are at risk of developing low blood sugar if they go for prolonged periods of time without a meal. Please give these little guys a **small bite** of food (not a full meal!) around 4:00-5:00 am the morning of surgery to help boost blood sugar.

Admit for Surgery

Checkin: Please allow at least 15 minutes to admit your pet for surgery. You will be warmly welcomed by a member of our team who will handle the surgical paperwork, take a brief medical history (i.e. when did your pet last eat?), and answer any questions you may have. At this point, your pet will be taken to the treatment area of our hospital and settled into his or her kennel for the day. Then our receptionist will collect a deposit and schedule a time that is convenient for you when your pet will be discharged.

Vitals and Bloodwork: Your pet will have a designated nurse called a "case manager." He or she will be caring for your pet from start to finish and is happy to answer questions even days after the procedure. The case manager will record your pet's vitals and weight and begin the medical record for the procedure. If we have not done blood work before surgery, we will do so before 9:00am on the day of surgery. If results are normal, we will proceed. If they are abnormal, you will receive a phone call to discuss the results. We require pre-surgical blood work in all of our surgery patients over the age of 5 years.

Patient Evaluation and Planning: If your pet did not have a pre-surgical appointment, he or she will be examined by Dr. Kensek at this point in the morning (around 9:00am). Based on physical exam findings, patient history, and blood work results; Dr. Kensek and your nurse will make an individual surgery plan for your pet. We will give a general outline of surgery below, but please understand no two patients have the exact same surgical plan.

Pre-Medication: Sometime between 9:00-11:00am your pet will receive a pre-medication injection. This causes a light sedation effect, but your pet is still fully conscious.

Bathroom break: We take surgery patients for a relaxed walk mid-morning in case they need to go!

IV Catheter and Fluids: Sometime between 9:00-11:00 am your pet's nurse will place an IV catheter in one of the front legs. This allows us to quickly and easily give fluids, anesthetic agents, and (if needed) life-saving medications intravenously. In an emergency event, your pet's blood supply will rush to the heart to keep it pumping, which makes the veins in the extremities difficult to access and we need those veins to give much-needed, life-saving medications! If an IV catheter is already in place, we have immediate access to your pet's vein in an emergency. In some procedures, intravenous fluid therapy is recommended, in which case, an IV catheter is needed. We require IV catheters to be placed in all of our surgery patients over the age of 5 years.

Surgical Prep and Anesthetic Induction: Sometime between 10:00am-12:00pm your pet's nurse will begin prepping for the procedure. We try to clip fur around the surgical site while your pet is awake, as long as it is comfortable for your pet. This decreases the amount of time your pet is under anesthesia. If your pet tolerates it, your nurse will administer oxygen to your pet prior to the procedure to prevent low oxygen during induction. Pain medication is also given prior to anesthesia to ensure your pet is as comfortable as possible.

Dr. Kensek will prepare the injectable anesthesia for your pet and administer it IV (this is called "induction"). This will cause your pet to "fall asleep." The doctor will then place an endotracheal tube. Your pet's nurse will apply lubrication to the eyes (your pet's eyes stay open during surgery and we want to prevent them from drying out) and give any other necessary injections. If you've chosen to microchip your pet, the nurse will implant the chip now. Then the nurses will trim your pet's nails (we do courtesy nail trims with all anesthetic procedures), finishing prepping the surgery site and move your pet into the operating room.

Surgery: After induction, throughout the procedure, and for several minutes afterwards; your pet will be connected to anesthetic monitoring equipment and oxygen. During the procedure your pet will be maintained under anesthesia with Isoflurane gas. The nurse will be at your pet's side the entire time, manually monitoring vital signs while Dr. Kensek performs the procedure. It is important to maintain your pet's body temperature, so there is a heating pad on our surgery table at all times. For dental prophylaxes, a nurse will perform the cleaning and Dr. Kensek will perform any dental extractions or suturing (if needed). For specific

details about your pet's procedure (how it is performed, how long it takes, what supplies are used) please call our office or ask your pet's nurse.

Post-Op & Recovery: After the procedure your pet will be maintained on oxygen while one nurse continues to monitor your pet and second nurse cleans the surgical area, disposes of biohazards, and removes the surgical supplies to be cleaned. Then your pet is disconnected from oxygen and transferred back to their kennel to recover on a heating pad with plenty of cushion and space. Your pet's nurse continues to monitor your pet and when your pet is awake, the endotracheal tube is removed. After your pet is *fully* awake, we offer a small amount of food and water, as he or she has not eaten since the night before. When your pet is able to eat, stand, and go for a relaxed walk, he or she may be discharged. Dr. Kensek prefers to see each surgery patient personally before they are discharged. Most patients are discharged between 4:00-6:00pm. Each patient is different and some pets take longer than others to fully come out of anesthesia. Most emergency situations actually happen *after* surgery, and your pet will have his or her dedicated nurse throughout post-op recovery.

Patient Discharge: The receptionist will check you out and alert the nurse you are present. The nurse will discuss the procedure and post-op instructions. He or she will go over how to feed your pet, whether your pet has sutures to be removed, how to restrict activity, any medications or bandages, and when to return for a recheck. The nurse will give you written instructions to take home and ask you if you have any questions. After all your questions are answered, your pet will be discharged. Be sure to set up an appointment for your post-operative recheck before leaving. A nurse will call you the following day to check on your pet and answer any questions.

Post-Operative Recheck: All post-op rechecks are included in the cost of the procedure. If you are even the least bit concerned about your pet following a procedure, please do not hesitate to call and make an appointment. There will be no charge for the exam. However, if your pet requires additional medications, bandages, or treatment these items will be charged. For routine procedures we like to see patients back within 7-10 days. For non-routine or emergency procedures we like to see patients the following morning. Sutures and staples usually cannot be removed until 10-14 days after the procedure.