



Anesthesia

Your pet is scheduled to have an anesthetic procedure in the next few days. We are sending you this information so you can better prepare and understand the process.

Whether the patient is a person or a pet, undergoing anesthesia carries some risk of complications. We will do everything we can to reduce the chance of a complication, we will examine your pet the day of the procedure, and we will recommend some tests, usually blood work, to help identify any risks. We want to look for any indications that your pet is not healthy enough to undergo anesthesia.

If you have any questions regarding the procedure, the risks, or any medical or surgical alternatives, please ask the doctor. You should have the patient at the hospital between 7:30 and 8:30 am. You will be able to talk to a surgical technician or the dental prophylaxis technician (if your pet is having dental work done) at this time. You will be asked to sign a consent form for the anesthetic procedure.

To help reduce the risk of complications, it is very important that you follow our directions, especially those for patient preparation.

- * Follow our directions.
- * If your pet is on medications, ask if you should change the medicine or the dosage. You might need to skip a dose, or to change the dose, or even give a different medication.
- * If your pet has diabetes, the doctor may have you change the number of units of insulin you give the morning of the procedure, and may have you alter how long we fast the patient.
- * You should withhold food in dogs and cats to reduce the risk of regurgitation and aspiration (breathing in the contents of the stomach and gastric juices into the lungs.) You should not restrict water at home, we will start this once they enter the hospital.
- * Dogs and cats over four months of age should be fasted overnight and have no breakfast before they are brought to the hospital. Puppies and kittens younger than four months of age should be fasted for no more than four hours. In the case of any other species, you should check with the doctor.



**WATERHOUSE
ANIMAL HOSPITAL**

PHONE: (559) 434-4000

ANESTHESIA: WHAT TO EXPECT BEFORE THE DAY OF THE PROCEDURE

NOTE: When your pet is unconscious, the gag reflex is suppressed. Your pet could inhale stomach contents, causing serious injury and even death. So you must be very strict about withholding food for the specified time.

*Older animals must fast longer than younger animals for three reasons: 1) older pet's metabolism is slower. 2) it often takes them longer to digest their food, and 3) they usually have greater energy reserves than younger animals.

Before the Procedure

You will check in with the surgery or dental prophy technician. They will ask you several questions including when the pet last ate, whether it has ever had a complication with anesthesia previously, and what medications, if any, your pet is being given. Include any over the counter medicines or herbal supplements. Your pet will then be placed in a kennel in the surgery or dental prophy area where they can be observed at all times. Several things will happen before the procedure:

1. The doctor will examine the patient.
2. Blood samples for testing are drawn and processed looking for any indications for not performing the anesthesia. The doctor may want other tests, such as urine tests or blood pressure.
3. The doctor evaluates the lab findings, and along with the history, physical exam, age, breed, temperament, and the procedure's level of invasiveness, anticipated pain, risk of hemorrhage or hypothermia (low body temperature), will determine the best type of anesthesia and medications, and create an individual anesthesia plan for your pet.
4. An IV catheter will be placed in a vein, usually on a front leg.
5. Pain medication will be given. Pain control is more effective if started before the pain stimulus. This also helps to relieve any anxiety if present.

During the Procedure

During the surgery or dental prophy, a technician or veterinary assistant will be dedicated to continuously monitoring your pet while under anesthesia. All patients under anesthesia are placed on warming agents, as hypothermia is a common complication of anesthesia; this is even more so in the smaller patients. All patients are wrapped in towels and/or have a Bair Hugger warming system working. This forces warm air into a pillow- like system that is wrapped around the patient as the surgery allows. All patients under anesthesia have electronic monitoring as well, usually checking the following:

1. Heart rate
2. Respiratory rate
3. Oxygen saturation
4. Blood pressure
5. Temperature
6. End tidal CO2
7. EKG

This monitoring by both electronic and experienced personnel allows us to recognize and quickly respond to any complications if they develop. As soon as the procedure is over, one of the surgery staff will call you to let you know the procedure is complete. When the doctor leaves the surgery suite, he or she will call you also.



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After the Procedure

Once the procedure is over, the patient continues to be monitored by the surgery or dental prophylaxis staff. Towels are wrapped around the patients or the Bair Hugger is still used if the body temperature is low. We also have warming discs we can place in the kennel.

Once your pet is awake, aware, warm, and comfortable, he or she can be discharged. Upon discharge, we will:

1. Review the procedure.
2. Explain follow-up care, including when your pet can begin to eat and drink.
3. Tell you when to resume current medications.
4. Tell you how to give new medications, if needed. We often send home more pain medication for you to give at home.
5. Explain how to recognize signs of complications in your pet. It is important to call immediately if your pet has a complication.
6. Tell you when you should bring your pet back for a recheck or suture removal.

In addition to telling you these instructions, we will send home a written copy of the aftercare instructions. You can review them now if you wish by visiting our web site: www.waterhouseanimalhospital.com

If you have additional questions or concerns please relay those to our hospital team. We all have pets of our own and understand the concerns that you may have. We have a special "hospital hotline" phone line that you will be able to call on while your pet is here. This phone line rings directly to the hospital team members that are caring for your pets and you are welcome to call anytime to check on your pet. We look forward to seeing your pet for their procedure.

Sincerely,
The Doctors and Staff of Waterhouse Animal Hospital
559-434-4000



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