

Consumer Guide To Elective Surgery For Your Pet

Thank you for recognizing the need to spay or neuter your pet.

Some pet owners “shop around” for the best price on these surgical procedures. Many ask themselves “Why does the price vary so much when it seems that everyone is performing the same procedure?” This guide was provided to help you find the best fit between the veterinary hospital you are calling and your expectations for the best care of your pet.

Questions to ask when you call and why you should ask them.

What kind of examination will my pet receive before surgery?

This is critical for several reasons. Pets should be examined both before sedation and before anaesthesia, and should have been examined at least once before when previously vaccinated. We want to ensure that the surgical patient does not have a heart murmur, or is suffering from organ disease or parasites that would severely interfere with recovery from anaesthesia, or have any detectable infectious disease that would endanger other patients in our hospital. We recommend some simple blood tests done before surgery to make sure organ problems, like liver and kidney disease, are not missed.

What kind of precautions are taken to ensure my pet’s safety?

Most patients lose a great deal of heat during surgery. If the patient’s temperature drops, then the heart may be affected. Body temperature should be monitored and a warm water circulation pad should be used under and around the patient.

While most surgery is uneventful, emergencies do sometimes arise. Early detection of impending problems greatly aids our ability to intervene and correct the problem. To prevent complications a breathing tube should be placed in all anaesthetised patients. This keeps the airway open and allows for supplementary oxygen and anaesthetic gas to be administered as needed. EKG, blood pressure, pulse, and oxygen saturation should be monitored throughout surgery to keep track of heart and lung function. Intravenous fluids are recommended to all surgical patients, and monitoring by a licensed Animal Health Technician is ideal. The practice should have a complete emergency drug kit and staff well trained in any eventual use.

How will pain be controlled for my pet’s comfort?

Surgery hurts! We all know this, yet there are hospitals who make no provision to prevent this from affecting your pet. Anaesthesia does not prevent pain once your pet is awake. Pain control should be offered on the day of surgery and for several days afterwards.

What instructions will I receive for the post-operative care of my pet?

Aftercare of surgical patients is very important for proper healing. The hospital should provide written discharge instructions, and the Doctor or Technician should instruct you on wound care, exercise and feeding restrictions, medication administration, and follow-up examination.

If after getting answers to these questions, you would be well advised to ask to visit the facility where your pet will undergo surgery. The facility should be clean and free from unpleasant odours. Hospitalized patients should be clean and comfortable with daily treatment records plainly visible. The staff should be well informed and professional, with evidence of their accreditation in sight. Ask yourself if you would be comfortable that your pet will be well cared for in such a place, if they had to stay for several days. While cost may be a factor in your decision about what facility you select, recognize that major surgery is not the best place to cut financial corners!

We encourage you to visit our facility anytime during normal business hours. We will gladly give you a tour of Abbotsford Veterinary Hospital, as we are extremely proud of the level of surgical care we are able to provide to your 4 legged friend.

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You and your pets are part of our family