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*Independent, Kind and Honest Veterinary Care in the Heart of Ryedale*

## DISCHARGE INSTRUCTIONS

Animals vary in the speed and ease with which they recover from an anaesthetic. Factors such as age, build, general health and the surgical procedure performed can all have an effect. We appreciate that the first 24 hours at home can be worrying for owners, and these notes are aimed to answer some commonly asked questions.

### **General Care**

It is important to keep your pet comfortably warm but not too hot. You should provide a quiet, stress free environment and avoid excessive fussing particularly from children or other pets.

### **Feeding**

Unless instructed otherwise, for example following surgery involving the bowel, a light meal can be offered in the evening but do not be alarmed if it is not eaten with the usual enthusiasm. It is better to feed something light and easily digestible such as boiled chicken, rice, pasta, white fish, or scrambled egg. Special recovery diets are also available. Encourage your pet to drink little and often.

### **The Anaesthetic**

It is normal for an animal to be drowsy or unsteady after an operation, and this may continue into the next day. An intravenous injection will probably have been given and hair will have been clipped from the foreleg. This will grow back in 6-8 weeks. Most procedures require the placement of an "endotracheal tube" through which gaseous anaesthetics are administered. Occasionally this causes a mild but transient cough.

### **The Wound**

Shaving fur is essential to prevent contamination of the wound during surgery. In our surgery we also use a blue skin disinfectant so it is normal for some staining of the fur and skin, this will wear off. Unless there are obvious signs of swelling, persistent bleeding, discharge, or loss of stitches, please leave the wound well alone. Bathing or cleaning surgical wounds is usually contra-indicated as it may delay healing and introduce infection. Licking or scratching of the area



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should be discouraged as this also impairs the healing process. It may be necessary to fit a special collar to prevent the patient having access to the wound.

### **Plaster casts and dressings**

It is very important that all dressings are kept dry. The dressings should be checked in 2 to 3 days at the surgery. A plastic bag may be placed over foot dressings for walks but should be removed promptly on return. If you notice that a dressing has become damaged or wet or is causing soreness or swelling please contact the surgery. Exercise Patients should not be exercised for the first 24-36 hours after surgery – dogs should be restricted to lead exercise until the stitches have been removed. Cats should be confined where possible. Specific instructions will be given where appropriate.

### **Surgical Drains**

Some wounds require the use of surgical drains in order to prevent post-operative fluid accumulation which impairs healing. If your animal has a drain fitted then expect blood-stained fluid to drip from the flexible tube protruding from the skin. It is advisable to take precautions to cover carpets upholstery etc. Drains are usually removed 24-48 hours after the operation, but if they fall out before this time do not be alarmed. Please contact the surgery if your animal has chewed the drain off as there is usually a significant portion inside the animal that will need to be removed. If this is the case please bring the drain with you.

### **Removal of stitches**

Skin stitches are usually removed around 10 days post-operatively. You will be given an appointment but please ask if you would like to see a veterinary surgeon before this time for any other reason. Care following dental treatment Soft food should be offered for 3-4 days. Advice will be given to help prevent recurrence. The aim will be to encourage dental exercise and improve oral hygiene.

Special prescription diets have recently been developed which are extremely helpful in the control of this very common problem. Don't forget to bring your pet for any post-operative checks that may have been arranged. If you have any concerns following your pet's procedure please do not hesitate to contact us at the practice on 01751 472204 (24hr contact line).