

Caring for Your Dog After Surgery

Thank you for spaying/neutering your dog. You have just helped to decrease the potential number of homeless animals and made your dog healthier and happier! Although spays and neuters are common procedures, please remember that your pet has just gone through surgery and needs appropriate care to properly recover.

Note: The postoperative care line can be reached at (844) MY-ASPCA, (844) 692-7722. If you have any questions or concerns after your pet has had surgery, call this number and choose the option that allows you to speak to a Client Services Representative. **Prior to seeking any veterinary care for a dog with a postoperative complication, you must contact the postoperative care line, which is available 24 hours a day/7 days a week.** Please be advised that if an animal's illness or injury is not related to the surgery, the ASPCA will not be responsible for costs associated with care. In addition, if postoperative instructions were not followed, the cost of the re-check appointment and care may not be covered by the ASPCA.

Anesthesia and Surgery

Monitor your pet for any signs of abnormal recovery from anesthesia and/or surgery. These may include, bleeding, lethargy or weakness, loss of appetite/decreased water intake, shivering, unsteady gait that persist beyond 24 hours after surgery.

Call the post-operative care line immediately if your pet experiences vomiting, diarrhea, labored breathing or has pale gums.

Vaccinations

If your pet received vaccinations, monitor the site of vaccination (shoulder/hind leg) and check for signs that your dog is having a reaction to the vaccine. These include, swelling of face, hives, limping, drooling, itchiness or pain or swelling at the vaccine site (shoulder/hind leg). If any of these signs occur, call the postoperative care line.

Food and Water

Approximately half your pet's normal serving of food and water should be offered about two hours after returning home from the clinic.

If your pet is under 16 weeks of age, feed him/her approximately half the normal amount of food and water as soon as you return home. If your puppy will not eat when he/she returns home and you can, without risk of being bitten, rub maple or Karo Syrup on the pet's gums using a cotton-tipped applicator.

Do not remove your pet's E-collar for feeding unless you are able to supervise while the E-collar is off. If you do remove it for meals, replace the E-collar immediately after your pet is finished eating.

Pain Medication

Your pet was given long-acting pain medication in conjunction with the spay/neuter surgery. **DO NOT GIVE HUMAN MEDICATION TO YOUR PET.** It is dangerous and can be fatal.

Surgery Site

There are no stitches on the outside of the surgery site. All stitches are underneath the skin. These stitches dissolve, so there is no need to seek medical attention for suture removal. The two sides of the incision are also adhered with medical grade glue.



If your animal easily allows, check the surgery site daily to make sure that it is healing. What you see on the day the animal is released from surgery is considered to be normal appearance for the surgical site. If the surgery site is very red, has green/yellow or reddish discharge, has a bad odor, has something sticking out from it, is warm to the touch, or has bruising or a bump that seems to be growing, contact the postoperative care line.

Do not apply any products to the surgery site unless recommended by staff members of the ASPCA Spay/Neuter Clinic.

Tattoo

Animals who have had surgery receive a small green tattoo. For dogs, the tattoo is placed alongside the surgical incision. No complications from the tattoo are expected, as sterile instruments are used to create it. However, please monitor the tattoo site for redness, swelling, or discharge. If these occur, please contact the postoperative care line.

Licking the Surgery

Site Prevent your pet from licking the surgery site as licking at the incision can cause a painful infection. Your pet's E-collar should prevent him/her from licking. Please use the E-collar for seven to 10 days after surgery. If your pet is still able to lick the surgery site while wearing the E-collar, contact the postoperative care line.

Jumping and Playing

Restrict jumping and playing for seven days after surgery. Too much activity can cause the surgery site to open or become swollen. 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.
- If your pet is small, carry him/her up and down stairs.
- Walk your pet on-leash to allow him/her to go to the bathroom. 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.

Keep Your Pet Away from Other Animals

Keep neutered males away from unspayed females. Neutered males can get an unspayed female pregnant for up to 30 days after neuter surgery. Keep spayed females away from unneutered males who may wish to mount them. Animals returning from the Spay/Neuter 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.

Bathroom Habits

Monitor your pet's urine for blood. A small amount may be present in female animals during the first 24 hours after surgery. If this continues or if your pet seems otherwise ill at any time, call the postoperative care line.

Bathing Your Pet

Do not bathe your pet for 10 days following surgery

Behavior

Spaying or neutering your pet can reduce or eliminate certain undesirable behaviors, such as urine marking, mounting, aggression, or spraying, but these behaviors may have already been learned and might not go away completely. If these behaviors do go away, they will do so gradually.