



Frequently Asked Questions Post Surgery

My pet had surgery and now doesn't want to eat. What can I do?

Dogs

- Most pets will not eat their regular dog food after surgery, especially if it is dry kibble.
- Try mixing canned dog food into normal diet, or alone for a couple day to enhance flavor. Always remember to gradually switch back into normal diet.
 - Use canned food such as; Hill's Science diet A/D, which is readily available here at Oakwood.
- Offer a cooked diet having a 1:1 ratio of a protein source and carbohydrate source. The protein source can be any meat (example: chicken breast, turkey breast, lean hamburger) that is low fat and should be cooked and any residual fat skimmed off. The carbohydrate sources typically include; white rice, potato, and pasta.
- Hand feeding by placing a small portion of their food in the mouth to stimulate appetite.
- Warming food slightly in a microwave will make the food more aromatic; remember to stir the food before feeding and test the temperature to ensure that it is not too warm, should be luke warm.
- Trying baby food is also an option as well, choose flavors such as; chicken, beef, turkey, veal.
- Remember that most pets will not eat well the first day or two after they get home from surgery

Cats

- Offer aromatic foods that contain fish such as tuna or smelly cat foods
- Try canned food such as Hill's Science diet A/D, which is readily available at Oakwood
- Hand feeding; place a small amount of food in the mouth so that they get the flavor
- Warm the food slightly in a microwave as the food will be more aromatic; remember to stir the food before feeding and test the temperature with your finger; it should be only luke-warm.
- Some cats will only eat dry food, try kibble if your cat normally has been fed that food
- Petting and stroking your cat frequently will help to stimulate appetite
- Remember that most pets will not eat the first day or two after they get home from surgery
- If your cat has not eaten for 1-2 days post surgery, please contact the staff here at Oakwood Veterinary Services so we can access your cat to prevent the development of serious liver problem (hepatic lipidosis).

When should I expect a bowel movement from my pet post surgery?

- Many pets will not have a bowel movement for the first several days after surgery
- Reasons that your pet will not have regular bowel movements after surgery include:
 - Fasting period prior to surgery
 - Many animals do not eat well during their hospital stay
 - Decreased appetite after returning home for the first few days
 - They are fed highly digestible food that produces little stool
 - Pain medications that contain narcotics (tramadol, fentanyl patches, morphine) and can be constipating

- If a pet does not have a bowel movement by the 5th day post-operative here are some options to try at home as well as contacting Oakwood Veterinary Services;
 - Miralax© - ½ to 1 tsp with meals, twice daily (medium and large canine patients), 1/8 to 1/4 tsp with meals, twice daily (cats and small canine patients)
 - Metamucil 1 tsp per 25 Kg mixed in with each meal (canned foods)
 - Canned pumpkin to increase fiber content

How do I know that my pet is in pain following surgery?

- Cats are typically harder to access than dogs; often do not express any symptoms.
- Crying
- Biting if you get near the surgical site or even the pet themselves wanting to bite the incision site
- Looking anxious
- Restlessness and not wanting to sleep; pacing
- Lack of appetite
- Hiding; mostly seen in cats.
- The most severe pain is usually for the first 2 to 3 days after surgery and then it is usually more of dull pain depending on the type of surgical procedure performed.

What can be done for pain at home for my pet?

- Prescription pain medications are used to keep your pet comfortable after a surgical procedure. Your technician should go over those medications prescribed at pick up.
- Apply a cold compress (if pet allows) to the surgical site. This may be helpful for the first 48-72 hours to help numb the area and reduce inflammation which can extend the duration of the local pain sensation.
- Pain medications used commonly in humans and dogs, such as Tylenol can kill a cat with even a single large dose as they lack the necessary enzymes in their liver to metabolize this drug. Please use the medications which are prescribe to you from Oakwood Veterinary Services, please contact our office before the use of any other medications.
- Anti-inflammatory medications can be used.

Is it okay if my pet is licking the incision?

- It is **NEVER** okay for your pet to lick their incision site.
 - Licking actually delays the healing process; it does **NOT** help the healing process at all!
 - Licking can cause an infection at the surgical site; redness and inflammation are typically signs of infections.
 - Licking can remove the sutures or staples and cause the incision to open, which in return can be extra expenses out of your pocket for office visits, wound management care, application of sutures/staples and possibly more medications prescribed.
- It's important for your pet to be wearing an E collar at all times till the surgical site is completely healed. If you didn't receive an E collar at pick up, please contact Oakwood to schedule fitting for an E collar at that time.

My pet has been vomiting since having surgery. What should I do?

- Please call our office to report any vomiting. (309)949-2144.
- Causes of vomiting after surgery:
 - Anesthesia can cause stomach upset that can create vomiting and will usually pass after 24-48 hours.
 - Limit the amount of food and water for the first day to help eliminate vomiting and regurgitation. Sometimes after animals go home from surgery, they will eat and drink too much causing them to regurgitate.
 - Some medications such as antibiotics or pain medications can cause stomach upset and vomiting after surgery. It is usually best to give medications with a meal to avoid stomach upset, unless directed otherwise.
 - If your pet is vomiting for longer than 24 hours please call to schedule a recheck exam.
 - Causes of regurgitating after surgery:
 - The most common reason for regurgitation following a surgery is caused by acid reflux while under anesthesia. The acid reflux can cause esophagitis (heart burn). Usually esophagitis will resolve in 2 or 3 days. Please call if condition persists.

At Oakwood Veterinary Services it is very important to us that your pet has a smooth recovery. Please don't hesitate to call us to call if you have any questions, or simply give us an update.

Contact us (309) 949-2144

Or if after hours, please contact

Animal Emergency Center (563) 344-9599