

Post-Surgery Factsheet

Below you will find answers to some common questions about your pet's post-surgical care at home. We welcome your calls - Please call our office if you have any questions or concerns after your pet's surgery. You will receive more specific information when your pet goes home.

When can my pet come home?

1. In most cases your pet will be able to be sent home the same day -- usually between 3-5 pm.
2. All dental cleanings can go home the same day.
3. Most spays and neuters can go home the same day.
4. Cat declaws spend one night in the hospital.
5. Other surgical procedures can result in longer stays.

What are my responsibilities when my pet comes home?

1. Provide a clean and quiet environment.
2. Allow access to litter box or walk on leash for going to the bathroom.
3. For declawed cats – replace normal or scoopable cat litter with shredded newspaper or “Yesterday’s News.”
4. Restrict activity and keep indoors.
5. Avoid interactions with other household pets if this is stressful.
6. Special instructions will be given on discharge from hospital

How do I give my pet food and water?

1. When your pet returns home, excitement may cause him or her to drink and eat too much.
2. To prevent vomiting, restrict food and water access for an hour or until your pet relaxes.
3. Then give small amounts of food and water for the next 8 hours.

What activities and exercise can my pet engage in?

1. When leaving the hospital, please use a leash or pet carrier to protect your pet.
2. Keep your pet as calm as possible. After hospitalization, becoming too excited can injure your pet.
3. For 7 to 10 days, limit exercise by blocking stairs and using a leash when outside. Short walks on a leash are OK.
4. Avoid any running and jumping.
5. Interactions with other household pets are OK as long as there is no vigorous play.
6. After one week, activity can gradually be increased.
7. Wait for at least 7-14 days before bathing or swimming. Avoid rubbing or brushing the incision.

What are normal surgery symptoms?

1. After surgery, it is common for pets to cough, to be groggy and/or to vomit once or twice.
2. He or she may also not have a bowel movement for 48 hours.
3. Please handle your pet gently.
4. It is normal for your pet to be sedated for several hours; do not be alarmed unless your pet cannot be awakened.

What does a normal surgical incision look like?

1. The skin edges should be together.
2. It is normal for there to be some redness and a slight amount of swelling.
3. The redness and swelling should gradually decrease over several days.
4. Discourage your pet from rubbing, licking, digging or chewing sutures. Check daily for swelling, redness or discharge.
5. Excessive swelling or seepage from the wound- apply warm compresses to the area for 2 or 3 minutes twice daily. If there is no improvement, or if sutures appear infected or irritated, please contact us immediately.

How do I apply a warm compress?

1. Take a clean washcloth and soak it in warm (not hot) water. Gently place it over the affected area with slight pressure. As the compress cools, re-soak and reapply.
2. It is OK to apply an antibiotic ointment like Neosporin onto the incision after the compressing is completed.

How should I care for a bandage or splint?

1. Keep it dry and clean- do not leave pet outdoors unattended.
2. Although water resistant tape is used, it is advisable to cover with a plastic bag when there will be exposure to moisture.
3. Keep activity to a minimum.
4. Do not allow pet to chew bandage.
5. Call hospital if there are any foul odors, or if bandage is wearing away or tearing

What do I need to monitor?

1. You may observe decreased activity and appetite for 1 to 2 days.
2. If your pet does not seem improved in 24-48 hours, please call our clinic.
3. If your pet exhibits any of the following symptoms, please contact our hospital right away:

Loss of appetite for more than 2 days	Diarrhea
Refusal to drink water for more than 1 day	Weakness
Depressed mood	Repeated Vomiting

Thank you for visiting Northside Animal Hospital. We wish your pet a speedy recovery!