



## FACT SHEET

### Post-Operative Instructions for Pets

#### **What should I do when my pet arrives home after its operation?**

On arriving home you should keep your pet warm and comfortable by providing a soft, clean bed, ideally in a quiet spot. Unless otherwise instructed, you should offer your pet a drink of fresh water. After a few hours you may give a small amount of food. Please keep your pet indoors overnight, or longer if instructed, and provide a litter tray. You should discourage jumping or any activity that could cause excessive stretching of the wound, especially during the first week of convalescence.

#### **My pet seems very sleepy; is this normal?**

Your pet has been given a general anaesthetic and/or a sedative. These drugs can take a number of hours to wear off and may cause some patients to appear drowsy for as long as a day or so. Over the next couple of days behaviour should return to normal; however, if you're at all concerned, do not hesitate to contact PAH. Be aware that most pets sleep even more than usual in the first week after surgery.

#### **What should I do if my pet is licking its wound or chewing the stitches?**

It is only natural that your pet may attempt to clean the operation site; however if this becomes excessive, there is the danger of the stitches being pulled out or the wound becoming infected. In this case an 'Elizabethan collar' may be necessary (we sell them at PAH). If we've given you an 'E collar' to prevent chewing, please use it. If your pet does succeed in removing any of its stitches, you should call us as soon as possible.

#### **What should the wound look like, and at what point should I be concerned?**

The wound should generally be clean with the edges together and the skin a normal or slightly reddish-pink colour. In pale-skinned pets bruising may be seen around the wound. Due to seepage of blood under the skin edges, this might not appear until a few days after the operation and in some cases can seem excessive in comparison to the size of the incision. In some cases a small amount of blood may seep intermittently from a fresh wound for up to 24 hours, especially if the animal is active. The wound should be kept dry.

Please contact us if you notice any of the following around the wound:

- Continuous seepage or a large quantity of blood
- Intermittent blood seepage continuing for more than 24 hours
- Any swelling, excessive redness of the skin or discharge.

#### **When should the stitches be removed?**

It depends on the type of surgery. In general we will remove most skin stitches (also called sutures) 10-14 days after the operation. But don't worry, we'll tell you the most appropriate time for your pet. If we use dissolvable sutures under the skin, there's no need to remove them.

**When can my pet resume a normal active life?**

This will depend upon the nature of the operation. For minor procedures involving small incisions, exercise should be somewhat restricted until a few days after the stitches are removed, However, if we performed a major operation or the incision is large, a longer period of convalescence will be necessary. This could involve keeping your pet house-bound for a number of weeks. Again, we'll tell you.

**What about medication?**

If you've been given any, please **READ THE LABEL CAREFULLY** and ensure to administer all medication as instructed. If you experience any difficulty in dosing your pet, please contact us for advice. Don't forget, we're your pet's other best friend.

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