

Caring for your pet after a spay or neuter

Your pet is recovering from anesthesia and surgery and needs your help! Please follow these instructions carefully to help ensure quick, safe healing for your pet. If you feel there is an emergency or if you think your pet is suffering complications from its surgery, please call your veterinarian immediately.

When you get home

1. Your pet may have an anesthesia “hangover.” They may be grumpy, or very reactive to noise, quick motions, bright lights, etc. Keep them in a quiet, dark, warm place. Keep them separated from other pets and children, and general commotion.
2. You may need to reintroduce food slowly. Offer a small amount of food and water as soon as your pet is fully awake and if they are not nauseous.
3. Take a look at your pet’s incision so that you know what it looks like, that way you will be able to see how it is improving over the coming days or notice any problems.

The most important things

1. Absolutely no licking of the incision area is allowed! If your pet is going to lick or begins to lick their incision, they need to wear an E-Collar (plastic cone) for 7-10 days after surgery. A pet can pull out stitches easily which can lead much more damage.
2. Limit activity—no running, jumping or playing for 7-10 days. If your dog or cat is older than 5 years they may need a longer recovery period.
3. No swimming, bathing or grooming for at least 10 days post surgery; you may clean around the incision with a damp cloth if needed.
4. Check the incision daily for any excessive swelling, bleeding or drainage.

The next day

1. Your pet should return to its normal eating and drinking habits.



2. Look at the incision. There may be some redness and a little bruising, but it shouldn’t be excessively swollen, or have any discharge or bleeding.
3. Again, many pets will try to lick the area, but licking & chewing is NOT allowed! If you see this, call our clinic to get an E-collar (plastic cone) to prevent the animal from opening the incision.

Potential complications

Spaying and neutering are very safe surgeries; however, complications can occur. Minimal redness and swelling should resolve within several days. Please contact your veterinarian immediately if redness and swelling persists or if you notice any of the following:

- Pale gums
- Depression
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Discharge or bleeding from the incision
- Difficulty urinating
- Labored breathing
- Decreased appetite
- Lethargy lasting more than 24 hours after surgery