

# Post-Op Instructions

*Following the instructions below will help ensure your pet has a safe and comfortable recovery and will help prevent post-surgery complications.*



**P: 803.228.4208 | E: [info@snipwell.org](mailto:info@snipwell.org)**

1. **Do not allow your pet to lick the incision site** which may cause infection or the incision to open. We highly recommend you purchase an Elizabethan collar, which prevents your pet from being able to reach the area. SnipWell has Elizabethan (Cone) collars available for purchase, or you can find them at most pet stores. The collar must extend 2 inches past your pet's nose to be effective. Please call our clinic for assistance if needed.
2. Pets must be kept indoors where they can stay clean, dry, & warm.
3. Every pet recovers differently, but it is important to limit their activity for 7-10 days following surgery to avoid disruption of the healing process. Restrict strenuous activity such as running, jumping, and playing. Only walk your pet on a leash until the incision has healed. Do not take your pet for long walks or allow them to jump on or off furniture during this time. If your pet is small, carry them up and down stairs. Restrict your pet to a crate, kennel, or small room when you are unable to supervise.
4. Your pet's appetite should gradually return to normal within 24 hours after surgery. Only offer ½ of your pet's normal meal the evening of surgery. You can return to normal feeding the day after surgery. Do not change your pet's diet during recovery unless specifically instructed. Doing so can mask post-op complications. Lethargy, vomiting, and diarrhea lasting more than 24 hours after surgery are not normally noted. Please contact us immediately if these occur.
5. Dogs and rabbits receive oral pain medication to be given ONCE daily for 3 days after surgery. Cats receive oral pain medication to be given TWICE daily for 3 days after surgery. Please start this the morning following surgery, after your pet has resumed eating.
6. Check your pet's incision twice daily. There should be no drainage, discharge, or odor from the incision in females, and redness and swelling should be minimal. Male dogs & cats may have small amounts of drainage or discharge for up to 3 days and mild swelling is normal. Dogs, female cats, and rabbits have internal sutures that will dissolve after approximately 4 months. Male cats and rabbits do not have sutures.
7. All surgeries have a small amount of surgical glue protecting the incision. Do **NOT** bathe your pet during the recovery period (10 days) or apply topical ointment to the incision. Doing so could cause the surgical glue to dissolve too quickly. Unless you are told otherwise, your pet does not have external sutures to be removed. If you have any concerns about your pet's incision, please contact our clinic for a courtesy recheck exam.

8. Cats and rabbits should only use dust-free litter for 7 days after surgery while the incision is healing to avoid irritation of the incision.
9. If your female pet was ***in heat*** at the time of surgery: While she is now unable to become pregnant, she will still attract intact males for a short period of time. Take extra precautions to keep her away from un-neutered males for at least 2 weeks. If a male attempts to breed with her during recovery, it can cause serious, possibly life-threatening damage. If your in heat dog had bloody vaginal discharge at the time of surgery, the bleeding may stop post-operatively, but it could also potentially continue for several weeks or stop and then resurface. If there is only a small amount of spotting and your pet is otherwise feeling/acting normal, this is not cause for concern. Anything more than this, please return to us for a recheck as it could potentially indicate irritation or infection of the uterine stump secondary to the sutures or contents of the uterine body at the time of spay. Surgical recheck exams by SnipWell for our surgeries are complimentary and treatment cost is generally minimal if you have followed discharge instructions accordingly.
10. Spaying & neutering are both very safe surgeries. However, as with all surgery, complications can occur. Minimal redness and swelling are the most common concerns and should resolve within 5-7 days. If they persist longer, please contact us.
11. Please contact us immediately if you notice:
  - Pale gums
  - Prolonged weakness
  - Unsteady gait
  - Loss of appetite
  - Decreased water intake
  - Vomiting
  - Diarrhea
  - Discharge or bleeding from the incision
  - Difficulty urinating or defecating
  - Labored breathing
12. DO NOT HESITATE TO CONTACT US IF YOU HAVE ANY CONCERNS ABOUT YOUR PET'S RECOVERY. We offer complimentary rechecks for any concerns related directly to your pet's surgery.
13. Since we are familiar with your pet and their surgery, we prefer to see them for a recheck if needed. However, if you have an immediate concern about your pet outside of our open hours (8:00am-4:00pm, M-F), please contact Urgent Vet in Fort Mill at [803.486.2550](tel:803.486.2550) or Carolina Vet Specialists/Animal Emergency at [704.504.9608](tel:704.504.9608).