MOFFITT
ANIMAL CLINIC

SPAY & NEUTER RECOVERY GUIDE

General take-home information to help your pet recover safely and comfortably after surgery

IMPORTANT: YOUR PET'S INDIVIDUAL INSTRUCTIONS
This guide provides general recovery information following a spay or neuter procedure. Your pet may have additional or different instructions based on their procedure, medications, or recovery. You will receive personalized discharge instructions at pickup. **Always follow your pet's individual discharge instructions when they differ from this general guide.**

The First 24 Hours

Your pet has been through anesthesia and surgery and will need special attention during recovery. Keep your pet quiet for the first 24 hours. Because anesthesia can temporarily affect body-temperature regulation, keep your pet at a temperature of around **70 degrees** during this period.

Eyes & Throat After Anesthesia

Eye ointment is administered during anesthetic procedures to keep the eyes lubricated, so the eyes may look moist afterward. The eyes may also be dilated from anesthesia, so a dimmed or dark room can be more comfortable.

Dogs and spayed cats have an endotracheal tube placed during anesthesia. Mild coughing from throat irritation can be normal for the first **24-48 hours**. If coughing persists, please contact the clinic.

Food & Water

Offer only **small amounts of food and water the evening of surgery**. Wait about 30 minutes before offering more to make sure your pet keeps it down. If your pet becomes sick to the stomach, discontinue food until the next morning. Anesthesia can cause nausea and vomiting for up to 24 hours after surgery.

Once your pet is keeping food down and does not show signs of illness, gradually increase the amount offered. Your personalized discharge instructions will include any additional feeding recommendations for your pet.

Incision Care

Check the incision daily. Some redness and swelling can be a normal part of surgery and healing. A small amount of clear fluid may also occur. Please contact the clinic for a recheck if the incision becomes painful, opens, or discharges pus or blood.

Do not allow your pet to lick, chew, rub, or pull at the incision. Keep the e-collar on when your pet is unattended, especially at night. **We recommend e-collar use for at least 5-7 days; if your pet continues to lick after that point, continue using it for the remainder of the 14 day healing period.**

Dissolvable Sutures

Dissolvable sutures are used for spay and neuter procedures unless otherwise noted in your pet's specific discharge instructions. The sutures begin dissolving or breaking down around **10 days after surgery**. Some patients may develop raised bumps around the incision as a reaction to the sutures. If this occurs, please call the clinic for a recheck.

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ACTIVITY & HOME RECOVERY

Follow the instructions that apply to your pet and procedure.

Dogs	Cats
• No running or jumping for a minimum of **5-7 days**. • Keep your dog on a leash when outside. • Prevent access to steps and climbing. • No bathing or swimming for a minimum of **14 days**. • Outdoor dogs should be kept indoors overnight.	• No bathing or swimming for a minimum of **14 days**. • Prevent climbing, jumping, and access to stairs for the first **24 hours**. • Outdoor cats should be kept indoors for at least **24 hours** after surgery. • We recommend keeping outdoor cats indoors for **7-10 days** when possible.

Medications

Your pet's medication plan is individualized. At pickup, our team will review medications provided during the procedure and any medications going home, including the dose, frequency, and when to begin them. **Please follow the medication instructions provided specifically for your pet.**

Additional Notes for Male Pets

After neutering, testosterone levels decrease over time. Male dogs and cats may still be capable of reproduction, although rarely, for up to **6 weeks** after surgery because active sperm may remain in the body. Please monitor your pet to decrease the risk of reproduction if there are intact females in the home.

When to Contact Us

- The incision becomes painful, opens, or has pus or blood discharge.
- You notice raised bumps around the incision that may indicate a reaction to dissolving sutures.
- Coughing after anesthesia persists beyond the expected recovery period.
- Your pet cannot keep food down or shows signs of illness.
- You have questions or concerns about your pet's recovery.

REMEMBER
This general guide and recovery video are designed to help you review the main recovery information at home. Your pet's personalized discharge paperwork remains the source for patient-specific medications, procedure details, and special instructions.

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