



Critters Without Litters 661-831-6000

After Surgery Instructions

Your pet has had major surgery and should be monitored by you to help prevent complications. If you have concerns or questions about your pet's recovery, please give us a call at 661-831-6000.

Limit Activity

For dogs, no running, jumping, or rough playing with other animals/children for 7-10 days after surgery. Walking on a leash is fine. **Cats** should be kept somewhere warm, dry and confined for at least the first few days after surgery.

Keep the E-Collar on for 7-10 days – Dogs only

All dogs are given an e-collar (the "cone") at the time of surgery. This is to stop them from licking at their surgical site and should stay on your dog for 7-10 days after surgery to make sure the surgical site heals properly.

Check Their Incision Twice Daily

Female dogs and female cats have an incision in their abdomen. Male dogs have an incision just above the scrotum, and male cats have one or two incisions in the scrotum. Check the incision site at least twice daily. There should be no drainage, and redness and swelling should be minimal. Male cats may appear as if they still have testicles; this is normal, and the swelling should subside gradually through the recovery period. If you have questions or concerns, please call us at 661-831-6000 for further advice.

Dogs and female cats have internal sutures that provide strength to the tissue as they heal; these will dissolve after approximately four months. Surgical glue has been applied to the skin to seal the incision. Male cats do not have any sutures and, unless you are told otherwise, your pet does not have external sutures. Occasionally pregnant cats will go home with external sutures, but these are made of dissolvable material and will fall out on their own without you needing to bring the cat back to our clinic.

If your pet had a hernia repair or your male dog was cryptorchid, your pet likely has more than one incision. Please do not forget to check all incisions.

Keep Their Incision Dry

Do not bathe your pet, let them swim or play in sprinklers, or have them groomed for two weeks following their surgery date. Do not apply anything to the incision site—the surgical glue on the incision will dissolve too quickly if it becomes wet.

Keep In-Heat Females Away from Males

If your female dog or cat was in heat at the time of surgery, you must keep her away from un-neutered males for at least two weeks. While she is now unable to become pregnant, she will still attract intact males for a short period of time. *If a male attempts to breed a female at this point, it can cause her serious, possibly life-threatening, damage.* If your female **dog** was in heat at the time of surgery, she may have a little discharge for a few days after surgery, which is normal.

Keep Them to a Regular Diet

Please offer your pet half of their normal meal the night of surgery. Small amounts of food at a time is better than one large meal at once in the 24 hours after surgery, but we do want them to eat something. This is especially important for puppies and kittens under 6 months of age. Their appetite should return gradually within 24 hours. **Do not change your pet's diet at this time, and do not give them junk food, table scraps, milk, or any other "people food" for ten days.** Changes in their diet can hide post-surgical complications.

If you need to entice your pet to eat, adding plain boiled white rice with no seasoning to their normal diet is acceptable.

Monitor Their Pain Levels

All animals are given a post-surgical pain injection that should keep them comfortable the day of their surgery, and we offer go-home pain medication for dogs for a small additional fee. All cats receive a post-surgical pain injection to keep them comfortable for the post-surgical period, the cost of which is included in their surgery charge. If your pet appears to be in pain after getting home, please call our clinic at (661) 831-6000, so that our staff can assess whether your pet needs to be examined.

Look Out for Complications

Spaying and neutering are both very safe surgeries; however, as with all surgery, complications can occur. Minimal redness and swelling should resolve within several days, but if they persist longer, please contact us. You should also contact us immediately if you notice any of the following:

- Pale gums
- Depression
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Discharge or bleeding from the incision
- Difficulty urinating
- Labored breathing

Call if You Have Concerns

If you have any questions or concerns directly related to the surgery during the recovery period, please call us at (661) 831-6000.

Critters Without Litters will treat any post-operative complications resulting directly from the surgery if the above post-operative instructions have been followed in full. **We will treat these complications at our clinic. If you take your pet to your regular veterinarian or other clinic, you will be responsible for the costs at that clinic.**

Your regular veterinarian must address illnesses or injuries that are not a direct result of surgery. Please call for an appointment as soon as you see cause for concern. We cannot be held responsible for complications resulting from failure to follow post-operative instructions, or from contagious diseases for which the animal was not previously properly vaccinated.

If you have an emergency outside our business hours, contact your regular veterinarian or VCA Bakersfield Animal Hospital at (661) 327-4444.