

Valley Central Veterinary Referral and Emergency Center

Frequently Asked Questions After My Cat's Surgery

When should my cat have their first bowel movement after surgery?

- Many cats will not have a bowel movement for the first 3-4 days after surgery.
- Reasons that a cat will not have a regular bowel movement after surgery include:
 - Your cat has been fasted prior to surgery.
 - Your cat may not have eaten well during their hospital stay or the first few days home.
 - Pain medications may slow down the digestive tract.
- If your cat does not have a bowel movement after 3-4 days upon returning home, canned pumpkin can be given or canned food.

My cat had surgery and now is not eating. What can I do?

- Offer smelly foods - like tuna, chicken, or canned foods.
- Try canned baby foods like chicken, turkey, or beef.
- Try replacing water with tuna juice, chicken or beef broth to provide calories until the appetite returns.
- If your cat is only accustomed to dry kibble, try that first.
- Petting or stroking your cat frequently will help relax your cat and stimulate their appetite
- Offer their food warmed and/or by hand - be careful of the temperature.
- IF YOUR CAT HAS STOPPED EATING FOR 24 HOURS, PLEASE CONTACT OUR OFFICE!

My cat is vomiting since returning home. Why? What can I do?

- Causes and treatments of vomiting after surgery:
 - Medications such as antibiotics or pain medications may cause nausea and result in vomiting. In order to see which medication may be causing this problem, separate them by about two hours. Normally your cat will appear nauseated within one hour of administering the medications. After you have narrowed down which medication it may be, please call our office and we may change or discontinue the medication.
 - Try offering the medications in a small amount of food.
 - Nausea may be a result of the anesthesia and should pass in a few days.
 - If your cat has had abdominal surgery or the vomiting persists more than 24 hours PLEASE CALL OUR OFFICE IMMEDIATELY!
- What can I do for my cat if they are vomiting?
 - Withhold any food or water for 12 hours. Start with only small, frequent amounts of water then food. We recommend a bland diet of Tender Vittles® or prescription diets that can be obtained from your regular vet. If your pet continues to vomit or becomes increasingly depressed, PLEASE CALL OUR OFFICE IMMEDIATELY!!

How do I know if my cat is in pain following surgery?

- Signs of pain can be difficult to assess in a cat. Signs may often be very subtle.
- Signs of pain include:
 - Biting at the surgical site
 - Growling or a deep moan/cry
 - Anxiousness
 - Restlessness and not wanting to sleep or lie down, or continual pacing
 - Quiet or reclusive behavior, however, your cat may just be upset about leaving and coming back home
- The worst pain is normally for the first 2-4 days.

Are there any medications I can give at home if my cat seems to be in pain?

- **IT IS VERY IMPORTANT THAT YOU DO NOT GIVE ANY OVER THE COUNTER MEDICATIONS TO YOUR CAT FOR PAIN. MANY OVER THE COUNTER MEDICATIONS MAY HAVE HARMFUL SIDE EFFECTS WHEN GIVEN WITH THE MEDICATIONS YOUR CAT HAS BEEN PRESCRIBED. Please call our office if the medications we have provided for your cat are not helping, we can prescribe stronger medications if needed.**
- Applying a warm or cold compress to the incision area may reduce the pain and swelling.

Is it ok if I allow my cat to lick the incision?

- No. When a cat licks their incision, it delays the healing process by traumatizing the area. Also bacteria from their mouth may infect the incision area.
- Licking may remove the sutures and open the incision, increasing the risk for infection.
- Cats frequently groom themselves and will lick their incisions as well. If the skin is red or irritated, this normally means your cat has been licking.

How do I stop my cat from licking?

- Collars, such as the Elizabethan collars, work best by providing a barrier between your cat's mouth and their incision.
- If the incision is over the chest or abdomen, an old baby t-shirt may be worn.
- Bitter Apple[®] or similar product may be placed AROUND the incision - not directly on the incision. However this does not deter some cats.