

## **Pre-anaesthetic Information.**

So, your pet has been booked in for a procedure to be performed under anaesthesia and you would like to know more of what will happen on the day. This provides an honest account of what occurs during an anaesthetic. It may provide more information than what everyone is looking for but hopefully it answers your questions and puts you at ease about the upcoming procedure.

### **Prior to the anaesthetic:**

Before the day it is often a good idea to wash your dog, particularly if they are booked in for surgery as they will not be able to have a bath for 10-14 days after the surgery. If your pet has dirty skin, this can increase the risk of a post surgical infection so a bath is definitely in your dog's best interests. I have yet to meet a cat patient who agrees with this line of reasoning, but thankfully most cats are fastidious about their cleanliness.

The night before an anaesthetic, your pet can have dinner as usual but please take away any remaining food at 10pm. There is a small risk of vomiting as an animal is recovering from anaesthesia and as they will usually have a reduced ability to swallow, this can increase the risk of aspirating, or inhaling stomach contents into the airway. The best way of preventing this is by ensuring the stomach is empty prior to an anaesthetic. For the same reasons, please take away your pet's water bowl at 7am, unless they suffer from kidney disease, diabetes or cushings disease. (we will give you more information if this is the case)

### **On the day:**

You will have an admission appointment with our surgical nurse who will answer any remaining questions you may have regarding the procedure. You will have been given a cost estimate for the procedure by the vet who booked your pet in and this will be confirmed.

You may be advised that your pet requires a **pre-anaesthetic blood test** to be performed. This blood test gives us an overview of your pet's health assessing kidney and liver function, blood protein levels and the presence (if any) of anaemia. It allows us to make more informed choices in the type of medications used during the anaesthetic if any disease is found. This is available for all pets and will be strongly advised if your pet is over 7 years of age or if there are any concerns about your pet's health.

Your pet may be administered **intravenous fluids** during the anaesthesia to improve your pet's blood pressure ensuring vital organs such as the brain, kidneys and liver maintain their blood supply. The side-effect most commonly seen during an anaesthetic is a drop in blood pressure and intravenous fluids counteract this effect. This is available and recommended for all patients and will definitely be prescribed if your pet is over 7 years of age or if there are any concerns regarding the health of your pet.

Shortly after your pet is admitted, they will have a catheter placed in their vein and be given a '**premed**', which is a combination of a mild sedative and pain relief. Even if your pet is not undergoing a painful procedure, the pain relief makes the anaesthetic proceed more smoothly. The sedative is given to alleviate any anxiety your pet may be feeling.

### **The anaesthetic:**

At the start of anaesthesia, your pet will be given a calculated dose of medication that will induce an unconscious state. They will have an endotracheal tube placed into their airway and connected to an anaesthetic machine. All the time they are connected to this machine, they will be breathing anaesthetic gas that maintains the state of anaesthesia. They will be monitored at all times by the surgical nurse who measures your pet's heart rate, respiratory rate, blood oxygen levels, blood pressure, body temperature and plane of anaesthesia.

At the end of the procedure, the gas is turned off and your pet remains breathing 100% oxygen until they retain their conscious state and the breathing tube is removed. Your pet is monitored closely until they are awake enough to return to the hospital ward. If your pet's procedure involved surgery or any other painful stimulus, your pet will have been administered further pain relief and may have pain relief sent home with them for the next few days.

### **Recovery at home advice:**

Pets recovering from anaesthesia may take a day or two to return to normal. They may be quiet and may not eat a full meal immediately afterwards. It is best to keep recovering pets indoors, warm and quiet and to feed only small amounts of food at a time. If surgery has been performed, they must be kept quiet for up to 2 weeks while their surgical wounds heal and they cannot have a bath in this time.

Please give any medications to your pet that have been dispensed and please call the vet clinic if you have any concerns about your pet.

Anaesthesia and surgery are safe procedures performed every day and we hope that this information minimizes the anxiety you may experience.