

Thank you for recognizing that your pet may need to undergo an elective procedure such as spay, neuter or dental. Many people "shop around" for the best price on these surgeries, without the knowledge of why the cost varies among veterinary practices. The questions below will better help you make informed decisions so you can determine the best fit between the veterinary practice and your expectations for the care of your pet. We recommend you ask for the surgical and procedural details as well as a hospital tour before booking any elective surgery or procedure.

**1. What pre-anesthesia evaluation will my pet have prior to surgery?**

This is important for a number of reasons. A *physical examination* is our first defense against performing surgery on an animal that may have infectious disease, a heart murmur, or be debilitated from parasites. As animals that appear normal can have hidden problems we recommend an additional workup consisting of pre-anesthetic blood work and an electrocardiogram.

Pre-anesthetic blood tests assess the function of organs that process and clear anesthetic drugs from the body and reduce the risk of serious complications when the pet is under anesthesia or in surgery. A pre-surgical electrocardiogram assesses the heart's electrical activity to make sure no arrhythmias are present that could change or preclude anesthesia. Our electrocardiograms are read by a Board Certified Cardiologist to ensure your pet receives the highest level of care.

We strongly recommend pre-anesthetic testing for all patients undergoing anesthesia who are less than seven and it is required for patients over seven years.

**2. How will my pet be monitored?**

While most surgery is uneventful, emergencies sometimes arise. Early detection of impending problems greatly aids our ability to intervene and correct the problem. All of our patients are monitored for heart rate, respiratory rate, Pulse Oximetry (% of oxygen in blood), electrocardiogram, and blood pressure. Blood pressure is especially important to assess as low pressure during anesthesia can indicate an impending problem or cause organ damage that can show up years later.

**3. Will my pet receive an IV catheter and fluids?**

While anesthetic complications are rare, they can occasionally occur. Immediate access to the patient's bloodstream is required and should be planned on prior to anesthesia. Fluids are given via this catheter and are important to maintain both blood pressure and hydration.

**4. Will my pet be intubated?**

A breathing tube should be placed (intubation) on all anesthetized animals. This keeps the airway open and allows for supplemental oxygen or gas anesthesia as needed. This tube is also very important to prevent aspiration into the lungs (which can lead to pneumonia) if a pet vomits or otherwise has excess fluids or materials in its mouth.

**5. What safety precautions and comfort measures will be taken?**

Anesthesia and surgery patients lose body heat through anesthesia and the opening of body cavities. Warmth should be provided during and after anesthesia. If patients get cold, they can

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becomes uncomfortable, which can affect the heart. Cold patients also take longer to recover from anesthesia. Patient temperature will be monitored at regular intervals after surgery and supplemental heating provided as needed.

It is not unusual for patients to be nervous when they spend the day here for surgery. To address their fears, we administer anti-anxiety medications to all patients prior to anesthesia. Not only do these medications reduce patient stress, but they actually reduce the amount of anesthetic drugs required to be given.

#### **6. How will pain be controlled for my pet?**

Surgery hurts! The anesthetic will not provide pain control once the pet wakes up. Pain should be controlled before, during and after the day of surgery. Dr. Hornstein has a special interest in pain management; he is a member of the International Veterinary Academy of Pain Management and was a contributing author of the New Jersey Veterinary Medical Association's Pain Management Guidelines. All surgical patients at our hospital receive different types of pain medications to ensure as comfortable a recovery as possible.

#### **7. Will I receive written post-surgical care instructions for my pet?**

Aftercare of surgical patients is very important for proper healing. Our hospital will provide customized written discharge instructions for your pet.

#### **8. How will my pet be prepared for surgery**

Hair will be removed from areas having surgery with a clipper and triple scrubbed with a combination of disinfectants. The patient is prepared for surgery in a preparation area, not in the surgery room. This prevents hair and debris from possibly contaminating the surgery area. All personnel assisting in the surgery prepare themselves to prevent contamination by wearing a surgical cap and mask and scrub their hands before donning a sterile surgical gown and gloves. At the Monroe Animal Hospital we use Avaguard, a surgical scrub used in human hospitals that kills 99.99% of bacteria on the hands within 30 seconds.

#### **9. The Facility**

It is expensive to have an area where only sterile surgeries are performed. Infection rates are increased the more traffic occurs within a room. Performing surgeries or procedures that are not sterile surgeries in the surgical suite increases infection rates. Having a sink in the same room where the surgery is completed increases infection rates.

#### **10. Surgical instruments and supplies**

Instruments used at the Monroe Animal Hospital are high quality. Lower quality instruments can result in increased tissue trauma, greater risk of infection, and a longer healing time. All surgical instruments are individually sterilized, used on a pet one time, and then cleaned, lubricated, and resterilized prior to reuse.

Surgical gloves are used once and disposed of after each surgery. All suture material used is of the highest quality and only used once as well. We close the incisions of most of our routine surgeries with dissolvable sutures that are placed under the skin. This minimizes patients licking at their incisions. To further reinforce the surgical site we often place a layer of sterile cyanoacrylate adhesive called Vetbond. This results in a stronger and more watertight closure.

#### **In Conclusion**

We pride ourselves on offering a high level of medical care and service. We invite you to ask any questions you may have or to arrange a tour of our facilities at any time.

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## 20 Questions to Ask About Your Pet's Procedure

Procedure Questions	Monroe Animal Hospital
1. Is preoperative bloodwork recommended?	YES!
2. Is a preoperative electrocardiogram (read by a cardiologist) recommended?	YES!
3. Will an IV catheter be placed?	YES!
4. Will an endotracheal tube be placed?	YES!
5. Will narcotic premedications be given?	YES!
6. Will a constant rate infusion of pain medications be used?	YES!
7. Will local anesthetics be used?	YES!
8. Will anti-inflammatory pain medications be administered?	YES!
9. Will my pet be monitored for electrocardiogram, blood pressure, pulse oximetry, heart rate, and respiratory rate?	YES!
10. Will a detailed chart of my pet's vitals be maintained?	YES!
11. Is a state-of-the-art heating system utilized to maintain body temperature?	YES!
12. Are individually sterilized surgical packs used?	YES!
13. Are swaged on needles and suture material used?	YES!
14. Are dissolvable sutures placed under the skin so suture removal is unnecessary?	YES!
15. Is the incision reinforced with sterile surgical adhesive?	YES!
16. Will my pet be kept on IV fluids until discharge?	YES!
17. Will my pet be monitored constantly until he/she goes home?	YES!
18. Will individualized written discharge instructions be provided?	YES!
19. Will the doctor be available by phone after-hours should I have any questions after my pet goes home?	YES!
20. Can I get a tour of the treatment area and surgical room?	YES!

