

Pre-Admission Information Pack

The aim of this information pack is to ensure that you and your pet can get the best out of our service. We understand that the day that your pet comes in for an anaesthetic can be stressful.

Therefore, we have prepared this information pack to give you an understanding of the process and help you make some decisions before you arrive, making the important day much more manageable. This pack is not exhaustive so if you have any questions please don't hesitate to call us or ask the nurse/vet who admits your animal on the day.

Preparation

- It is very important that any animal having sedation or a general anaesthetic has an empty stomach. It is essential that your pet does NOT have any food after midnight the night before they are due to come to the surgery. Water should always be left out overnight.
- Please mark any leads, collars or carry boxes clearly with your pet's name and your surname.

Dogs

- Please make sure your dog is as clean as possible (no muddy walks before admission and some animals may benefit from a bath)
- Ensure that your dog has been offered the opportunity to go to the toilet on the morning of the operation

Cats

- Please keep your cat in the night before the operation to ensure that they can be caught and that they have been starved (no food after midnight)
- Please leave a litter tray down overnight to encourage your cat to use the toilet before admission

Admission

Depending upon the reason for admission, you will have an appointment in the morning with a vet or a nurse. Please arrive on time as this time of day is often very busy and we want to get your pet settled as quickly as possible.

What happens at admission?

- We will take you through our admission consent form ensuring that you understand the procedures that we propose to perform
- We will need a contact telephone number that we can call you on at ANY point during the day
- If you have not been given an estimate for the cost of the procedure please ask for one at this point to avoid confusion at discharge
- This is your time to ask any questions so please do not hesitate to ask, even if you think it's a silly question

- We will either make an appointment for you to pick your animal up or we will give you a time at which it would be appropriate to call us for an update. We will always ask you to call us before you come to pick up your pet to ensure that they are awake enough to go home. Anaesthetic recovery times are unpredictable so please bear with us if we ask you to delay your discharge appointment
- Before you sign the consent form we will ask you four questions offering you additional services for the safety and health of your pet. Information on each of these services is found immediately below this section. Please read this information so that you can come prepared with decisions or questions

1. Would you like your pet to have a Pre-Anaesthetic Blood Test?

Cat and Dog: £52.77

A pre-anaesthetic blood test is designed to evaluate whether there are any obvious signs that your pet may be a higher anaesthetic risk than an animal with a normal test result. This blood test is NOT a disease monitoring profile. Although this test may give our vets a hint that a disease process is occurring, a negative result does not necessarily mean that your animal is 100% healthy. A full disease scan requires a blood sample to be sent away to an external lab. If the vet who admits your pet is already suspicious of a disease process it is likely that they will suggest a General Health Profile from the outset and they will discuss this with you.

What do we test in a pre-anaesthetic blood test and why?

- Red blood cell count to look for anaemia - Animals with anaemia may not be able to carry enough oxygen during an anaesthetic to prevent organ damage.
- Kidney function parameters - The kidney is very sensitive to a drop in blood pressure which is one of the most common side-effects of anaesthetics. An anaesthetic is unlikely to cause problems in healthy kidneys but could turn undiagnosed mild kidney failure into a severe problem.
- Glucose - A low glucose result could mean the animal does not have enough energy to survive an anaesthetic.
- Liver enzymes - The liver is responsible for breaking down anaesthetic agents. A sick liver may mean that a normally safe dose of anaesthetic might result in increased side-effects, or that your pet recovers from its anaesthetic very slowly.
- Protein measurement - If there is a very low level of protein in the blood, normally safe doses of anaesthetics may become dangerous.

If you decide to have a pre-anaesthetic blood test for your pet and the results are abnormal the vet may decide one of the following:

- Continue with surgery if the results are not significant
- Continue with surgery but advise you to have your pet placed on a drip to maintain blood pressure and hydration during surgery
- Delay surgery until another day once the blood results are normal

- Extend the pre-anaesthetic blood test to a general health profile in-house
- Send a blood sample away to an external laboratory to get a more extensive set of results

We WILL contact you to discuss abnormal results so please ensure we have the correct contact telephone number.

2. Would you like your pet to have intravenous fluids (drip) during surgery

Cat and Dog : £41.77

The most common side-effect of a general anaesthetic is a reduction in blood pressure. In most cases this will not be significant enough to cause concern. However, in a small proportion of animals blood pressure will drop to a level where the blood supply to vital organs such as kidneys is compromised. If the blood pressure remains low for an extended period of time the cells of these organs may die. On rare occasions this can result in organ failure following surgery. In most healthy animals there will be enough healthy tissue remaining and the animal will suffer no ill effects. However, it is possible that this insult to the kidneys may remain in the animal for life and contribute to an increased risk of kidney failure at a later date.

During surgery the best way to maintain an animal's blood pressure is to pre-empt the problem and support the circulation with intravenous fluids (a drip). If blood pressure drops we can give special types of fluids or drugs designed to bring the blood pressure back to normal quickly.

We measure blood pressure routinely in the majority of our anaesthetics. If blood pressure falls and we already have access to veins via a drip then any problems can be rapidly dealt with. If we do not have intravenous access when blood pressure drops it can be difficult to gain access to veins and it can be slower and harder to bring blood pressure back to normal. On very rare occasions pets may be placed on a drip during surgery as part of our emergency procedure for severe low blood pressure but if we do not already have intravenous access it can be harder to set things right.

Intravenous fluids do not replace pre-anaesthetic blood tests nor vice-versa. If you are having difficulty deciding whether to have them both or just one please ask the nurse or vet to help you make the right decision for your animal.

3. Would you like your pet microchipped?

Cat and Dog: £26.03

A microchip is about the size of a grain of rice that goes under the skin. When scanned it reveals a 15 digit identification number which only vets or the RSPCA can use to find your contact details if your pet has been handed in as lost. Under anaesthetics we offer microchipping at a 10% discount and it is much less stressful for your pet.

4. Would you like your pet to go home with a Recovery Pack?

Cat: £3.01, Dog: £5.57

General anaesthetics can have a mild effect on the stomach, making it sensitive and slightly inflamed. To reduce the effects of this we advise all animals that have had an anaesthetic to be fed a bland diet, such as chicken and rice, for 24-48 hours. A recovery pack is a specially designed post-operative diet. The pack will contain enough food for the immediate post-operative period and is of

high nutritional value, balanced for your pet's post-operative needs. It comes in easy to use tins or sachets, saving time and money compared to preparing chicken and rice meals at home.

The General Anaesthetic

To help reduce anxiety and also to reduce the dose of anaesthetic required your pet will be given a light sedation, known as a "premed", about 30-45 minutes before they are anaesthetised. This premed also includes your pet's pain relief for the procedure if required.

General anaesthetics are initiated by injection into the vein which is usually accessed by clipping a small patch of hair from one of the front legs. The anaesthetic takes about 30 seconds to work during which time the animal gradually falls into a deep sleep.

Once your pet is fully asleep we place a tube into the airway. This tube carries a mixture of oxygen and anaesthetic gas to the lungs to keep them comfortably asleep throughout the procedure. Some animals may experience a mild cough or irritation post-anaesthetic due to the tube.

The anaesthetics that we use are cleared very quickly from the body and animals usually regain consciousness within 5-10 minutes of the gas being switched off. Once awake, however, it can take up to two hours before they can walk without falling over and most animals will feel woozy for 12 hours or so.

Collecting Your Pet

Although we may have made an appointment for you to pick up your pet please call us at least one hour before that time to ensure that they are awake enough to go home. The most common reason for appointments being changed is that other emergencies have delayed the start of your pet's operation. We ask for your flexibility on this matter as we can never predict how busy our day may become.

At your discharge appointment the nurse or vet will go through any medications with you and will give you post-operative care instructions specific to the procedure that your pet has undergone, such as exercise restriction. You will also be informed of when we would like you to return for check-ups, if your pet has surgical wounds this will be at least twice.

Please contact us if you have any concerns in the period following your pet's anaesthetic

Please note: Prices included in this leaflet are correct at the time of printing on 01/08/2010