



## Pet Owner's Guide to Elective Surgery

In addition to regular examinations, appropriate vaccinations and testing, and protection against parasites, most of us will arrange for our cats to have elective surgery at some point in their lives. The most common elective surgical procedures performed on dogs and cats include neutering (orchietomy), and spaying (ovariohysterectomy). Although these procedures are very common, and sometimes referred to as “routine,” they are still surgical procedures conducted under anesthesia. Since there are many benefits to having appropriate elective surgeries performed, we believe that any potential risk is far outweighed by the potential good. .

You may be reading this because we have recommended that your pet have elective surgery. We appreciate that you want to consider all of your options when you are faced with a major decision about your pet's health, and we encourage you to ensure that your pet is receiving the highest level of care. When deciding where to have your pet's surgery performed, make sure that you ask the following questions:

### ***What type of anesthesia will my pet receive during the procedure, and what precautions do you take to minimize risk to my cat during the procedure?***

At KSAH, your pet's safety is our first concern. All patients receive a **physical examination** prior to any anesthetic being administered, and depending on your pet's age and health status, **laboratory tests** are recommended to assess your pet's ability to process and metabolize the anesthetic drugs. An **intravenous (IV) catheter** is placed prior to anesthesia for the administration of drugs and fluids, as well as to provide the ability to rapidly administer treatment should your pet have a problem while under anesthesia. **IV fluids** are given to your pet during the procedure to maintain normal blood pressure and to ensure that there is good circulation to vital organs such as the kidneys. **Injectable and inhalant anesthetics** are used in combination to provide a level of safety similar to what you find in human hospitals. An **endotracheal (breathing) tube** is used to provide oxygen and inhalant anesthetics to your pet, while at the same time ensuring an open airway at all times. A veterinary technician, under the direct supervision of the attending veterinarian, uses **state-of-the-art body function monitors**, including pulse oximetry and EKG, to closely monitor your pet.

### ***What kind of equipment do you use for elective surgery, and what steps do you take to prevent infection?***

At KSAH, we use only **sterilized, autoclaved instruments** for our surgical procedures. The surgeon is fully scrubbed, and wears a surgical cap, mask, sterile gown, and sterile surgical gloves during all procedures that enter a body cavity. We have a dedicated operating room that is kept especially clean to avoid contamination during surgery. Your pet's fur is clipped to keep hair out of the surgical site, and the skin is specially scrubbed with an antiseptic to remove any bacteria from the surface of the skin.

### ***Doesn't surgery hurt? What pain control do you provide?***

At KSAH, we take the comfort of our patients very seriously. Any surgery, regardless of how involved it is or how good the surgeon is, will cause pain. We include pain medications in our anesthetic protocols to prevent your pet from experiencing pain upon waking up. We use a combination of pain medications in the hospital to ensure **effective, long-lasting pain relief**.

***What kind of follow-up care do you provide after the surgery? Will you advise me what to do to help my pet have the best possible outcome from the surgery?***

At KSAH, we routinely provide you with **written discharge instructions** that will help you to understand what your role needs to be in your pet's post-operative recuperation in order to minimize any chance of having problems after the surgery. Typically, **we will also call you at home** the day after surgery to ensure that everything is going well, and to answer any questions you may have. We are happy to address any questions or concerns you may have about your pet, before or after the procedure.

We invite you to compare our standards to any veterinary facility; once you evaluate the level of care that your pet will receive at KSAH, we believe that your decision will be clear.