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After Surgery Instructions

Some animals are active after surgery, while others remain quiet for a while. Either way, it is very important that you limit your pet's movements during the **7-to-10-day recovery period**, as strenuous activity, such as running, jumping or playing, could disrupt the healing process and even cause the incision to become swollen or open. To help keep your pet from being too active:

- Place your pet in an adequately sized carrier, kennel, crate or small room when you're not able to supervise him/her. The animal must be able to stand up and turn around in the housing unit.
- If your pet is small, carry him/her up and down stairs.
- Walk your pet on a leash to allow him/her to urinate or defecate.
- Do not take your pet for long walks or allow him/her to play with other animals or people. Also, do not allow your pet to jump on or off furniture.

To limit your cat's activity, as well as help them feel safe and comfortable, place them in a quiet, confined area such as a bathroom, laundry room or kitchen. This provides a safe hiding place for them, where you can easily monitor their recovery. Remember to provide fresh food and water and a clean litter box.

After surgery, your pet's appetite should return gradually within 24 hours. Give your pet a half-size meal when you bring them home, and then feed them their normal evening meal. Puppies and kittens may have an additional meal through the day. Water should always be available.

Dogs and female cats have internal sutures that provide strength to the tissue as they heal; these will dissolve after approximately four months. Surgical glue has also been applied to the skin to seal the incision against bacterial penetration. Male cats do not have any sutures, and, unless you are told otherwise, your pet does not have external sutures.

Do not bathe your pet during the recovery period (10 days) or apply topical ointment to the incision site—the surgical glue on the incision will dissolve too quickly if it becomes wet. Pets must be kept indoors where they can stay clean, dry, and warm, although dogs can be walked on a leash to relieve themselves.

Female dogs and cats have a mid-line incision in their abdomen. Male dogs have an incision on the scrotum, and male cats have two incisions, one on each side of the scrotum. Check these incision sites at least twice daily. What you see when we discharge your pet is what we consider normal.

Prevent your pet from licking the incision site, which may cause infection, by distracting your pet with treats or by using an Elizabethan collar or surgical suit. If the animal is licking, it will get infected and will require a visit and medication from your regular Vet Clinic.

There should be no drainage, discharge or odor in females, and redness and swelling should be minimal. Male dogs may have small amounts of drainage or discharge for up to three days. Male cats may appear as if they still have testicles; this is normal, and the swelling should subside gradually through the recovery period.

Spaying and neutering are both very safe surgeries; however, as with all surgery, complications can occur. Minimal redness and swelling of the surgery site should resolve within several days, but if they persist longer, please contact us. You should also contact us if you notice any of the following:

- Pale gums
- Depression
- Unsteady gait
- Loss of appetite or decreased water intake
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Discharge or bleeding from the incision
- Difficulty urinating or defecating
- Labored breathing

The Surgery Center at Safe Harbor will treat any post-operative complications resulting *directly* from surgery. Depending on your location and the time of day, we may see your pet at our facility in Foley or arrange for your pet to be seen elsewhere. **Please TEXT (251) 202-3229 as soon as you see cause for concern.** Sending a picture if appropriate. We cannot be held responsible for complications resulting from failure to follow post-operative instructions, or from contagious diseases for which the animal was not previously properly vaccinated. Your regular veterinarian must address any illnesses or injuries that are *not* a direct result of surgery.