

## **POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS FOR CATS**

### **What should I do when my cat arrives home after its operation?**

On arriving home you should keep your pet warm and comfortable by providing a soft clean bed, ideally in a quiet and draught free room at approximately 20-22°C. Unless otherwise instructed, your cat should be offered a drink of fresh water. After a few hours a small amount of food may be given, such as white fish or chicken. Please keep your cat indoors overnight, or longer if instructed, and allow the use of a litter tray. You should discourage any jumping or activity that will cause excessive stretching of the wound, especially during the first few days post-operatively.

### **My cat seems very sleepy, is this normal?**

Your cat has been given a general anaesthetic and/or a sedative. These drugs can take a number of hours to wear off and may cause some patients to appear drowsy for a day or so. Over the next day or two their behaviour should return to normal, however if you are at all concerned do not hesitate to contact the surgery.

### **Why has my cats foreleg been clipped?**

This is where the anaesthetic or sedative was administered. There may also be a small dressing on the leg; if so this can be removed the following day unless otherwise instructed.

### **My cat has developed a slight cough since the operation. Is this anything to worry about?**

Your cat may have had a tube placed in their trachea (windpipe) during the anaesthetic - this can occasionally cause mild irritation and a slight cough as an after-effect. If so, it will settle down over the next few days, however should it persist then contact the surgery.

### **What should I do if my cat is licking its wound or chewing the stitches?**

It is only natural that your cat may try to clean the operation site, however, if this becomes excessive, then there is a danger of the stitches being pulled out or infection being introduced into the wound. If you have been given an Elizabethan-type collar to prevent the cat chewing then please ensure it is used, otherwise please contact the surgery and ask for one. Not surprisingly, many cats find these collars strange at first and will attempt to remove them. However, after a short period most animals will settle and tolerate wearing the collar. Once accustomed, it is better to keep the collar on permanently, rather than to take it on and off. Remember - it only takes a few seconds of unobserved chewing for a cat to undo its stitches.

If your cat does succeed in removing any of its stitches then please call the surgery as soon as possible.

### **What should the wound look like, and when should I be concerned?**

The wound should normally be clean with the edges together and the skin a normal or slightly reddish/pink colour. In pale skinned cats bruising may be seen around the wound. This may not appear until a few days after the operation, and in some cases can seem excessive in comparison to the size of the incision, however this is due to seepage of blood under the skin edges. In some cases a small amount of blood may seep intermittently from a fresh wound for up to 24 hours, especially if the animal is active.

Please contact the surgery if you see any of the following at the wound:-

1. Continuous seepage or a large quantity of blood.
2. Intermittent blood seepage continuing for more than 24 hours.
3. Any swellings, excessive redness of the skin or discharge.

### **When do the stitches need removing?**

In general most skin stitches (also called sutures) are removed 7-14 days after the operation depending on the type of surgery performed. You will be instructed when is the most appropriate time for your cat.

### **When can my cat resume a normal active life?**

This will depend upon the nature of the operation. In the case of a minor procedure involving a small incision, some restriction of exercise should be maintained until a few days after the skin stitches are removed. However, if major operation has been performed or a large incision is present a longer period of convalescence will be required, which may involve keeping your cat house-bound for a number of weeks.

### **If you have been given any medication**

Please **READ THE LABEL CAREFULLY** and ensure that all medication is administered as instructed. If you are experiencing any difficulty in dosing your cat please contact the surgery for advice.