

# SPAY/NEUTER VETERINARY CLINIC OF THE SANDHILLS

The Community Solution to Animal Overpopulation



## PREPARING YOUR PET FOR SURGERY

### The weeks prior to surgery

#### **Get established with a full service veterinarian:**

A thorough physical exam by your family veterinarian can verify whether your pet is healthy enough for surgery. They can also give you recommendations for feeding, training, and preventative medicine.

**Vaccinations:** It is extremely important to have your pet up to date on vaccinations. They are needed to keep your pet healthy, prevent him/her from acquiring life threatening illnesses, and ultimately prolonging life. Your veterinarian will explain the vaccines in more detail but it is essential to make sure your pet receives the two “core vaccines:”

**Rabies** and the **Distemper/Parvo combination (DA2LPPV)** for dogs and **Distemper/Upper respiratory (FVRCP)** for cats. In addition, it is strongly recommended that your pet remains vaccinated for **Bordetella (Kennel Cough)** any time they are around other animals. This includes being out in public, boarding, dog parks or going to the veterinary office.

**Rabies** is a deadly zoonotic disease (contagious to humans and other animals), without a cure, and is required by law. North Carolina state law requires a current rabies vaccination for your pet. Please bring proof in the form of a certificate (tags are not acceptable forms of proof). We are otherwise required to administer one at the time of surgery for a charge of \$7.

The diseases covered by the **Distemper Combination vaccines** can also be deadly and are very contagious. Parvo virus can live in the environment for more than 6 months. Any pet that is having diarrhea should not be brought to the Spay Neuter Clinic. We require pets to wait approximately 6 months after diagnosis of Parvo before coming to the clinic. This ensures that they have completely recovered, are not shedding and helps to reduce the risk of them spreading the disease to others. We do not administer this vaccine at the Spay Neuter Clinic, so encourage you to see your regular veterinarian.

**Bordetella or “Kennel Cough”** is another highly contagious disease. Dogs may spread the disease without actively showing signs of coughing, but the majority of animals with kennel cough will be coughing. If your dog is coughing for any reason, they will not be allowed in the Spay Neuter Clinic to reduce the risk of spreading the disease. We do not administer this vaccine at the Spay Neuter Clinic, so encourage you to see your regular veterinarian.

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There are several other vaccines that you and your vet can determine whether your pet needs based on his/her lifestyle and individual needs. These vaccines including but are not limited to Leptospirosis, Feline Leukemia, Influenza, and Lyme disease.

The incidence of all of the diseases discussed are high in this area and animals can be spreading the diseases before and after showing symptoms. Any time you take your pet into the public or anywhere around other animals they are at risk for contracting illnesses. In addition, surgery and the stress associated can make your pet more likely to show symptoms of illnesses that were lying dormant. **We recommend vaccination at least one week prior to your appointment to help protect your pet.**

While no vaccine is 100% effective, vaccination will lessen the chance of your pet contracting disease, as well as decreasing the severity of the disease if your pet does contract it. Please consult your regular veterinarian for further information.

**Preventatives: Heartworms** are parasites transmitted from the bite of a mosquito and can cause a potentially life-threatening disease. Both dogs and cats can become infected, although dogs are more likely to develop disease. Animals that spend time outdoors are at higher risk of becoming exposed, however, mosquitoes can easily get inside and pose a threat to indoor animals. Treatment is costly and time consuming and animals can suffer long term effects even after treatment. Prevention is easy to administer to your pet and comes in oral and topical formulations.

A pet with heartworms is at a higher risk of complications both during and after surgery and it is highly recommended to have your animal on preventative prior to surgery. Let us know if your pet is heartworm positive.

**Fleas and ticks** are more than just a nuisance. They can transmit serious diseases as well as intestinal parasites to your pet. Some of these diseases can also infect humans. Your veterinarian can discuss preventative and treatment options for your pet. We strongly discourage over the counter oral and topical preventions, as they can have potentially fatal side effects.

**Training and Socialization:** Animals are generally happier and better pets if they have rules and jobs. Basic training can also make visits to the veterinarian much easier and less stressful for you as well as your pet. It is a good idea to get dog used to a leash as well as basic commands like “sit” and “stay” as soon as possible after they come into your home. Crate training is also a great idea for both dogs and cats. If they are not afraid of a crate or carrier, they will be less afraid at the veterinary hospital and traveling will be much more enjoyable for everyone involved.

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It is important to keep your pet socialized with people and animals. This is ideally started when the animal is young but can be done at any stage of life with the right considerations. This is also a wonderful opportunity to familiarize them with many different surroundings and experiences. This may include exciting trips to the park, the beach, or dog-friendly stores.

### **The day before surgery**

#### **Observe your pet's behavior:**

Spend some time with your pet and try to notice if his/her activity level is normal, if they have normal urine and stool, a normal appetite, any recent vomiting, or if you notice any sneezing or coughing. If you notice any changes, call us or your veterinarian. It is good to notify the Spay Neuter Clinic so that we can determine together whether or not it is safe to perform surgery in the next 24 hours.

#### **Bathing:**

It is often beneficial to bathe your dog prior to surgery to help clean the skin and fur. This is especially important for female dogs or especially dirty animals. Remember you will not be able to bathe your animal for 14 days after surgery.

#### **Fasting:**

Any time that your animal may need sedation or anesthesia, you will be instructed to withhold food the night before and the morning of the procedure. They can have water. This is for your pet's safety. If your pet vomits up its meal during or just after surgery, they are at risk for inhaling food material. This can make anesthesia more risky and can lead to pneumonia (infection of lungs). Pneumonia can be life threatening and requires close veterinary supervision, medications including antibiotics, and sometimes hospitalization.

For dogs that are less than 5 pounds, we worry that they will become hypoglycemic if food is withheld for too long. For these dogs, we recommend either feeding right at midnight the night before surgery or giving a very small meal (1/4 what you would normally feed) early the morning of surgery.

Your dog or cat may act like they are starving but they will be fine skipping a meal or two and we often offer a small snack after surgery.

#### **Housing:**

Consider where you are going to keep your pet after surgery. They should be in a clean environment where they cannot become too active. Generally we recommend keeping them indoors for at least 10-14 days until healed. They should be wearing their e-collar

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during this time. Male cats tend to recover more quickly and can return to their normal lifestyle 72 hours after surgery.

### **The Big Day: The Day of Surgery**

#### **Fasting:**

Remember not to feed breakfast to your pet the morning of surgery. This includes treats. If your pet is sneaky and may try to steal food from another animal in the house, you may need to separate him/her from the other pets so they don't eat anything. They can have water.

**If they have to receive a medication the night before or day of surgery, let the veterinarian know what the medication and dose is, as well as why they are receiving this medication. MAKE SURE THIS INFORMATION IS PUT ON THE REGISTRATION PAPERWORK.**

#### **Reduce stress:**

Although easier said than done, try to go about the morning with your normal routine and try to maintain a calm environment. Your pet is bound to have a stressful day once they get to the veterinary clinic, so reducing stress at home and in the car can be very helpful.

This is ESPECIALLY true for CATS! Most cats don't enjoy their cat carriers, even if you've trained them to like their carrier at home. It may be helpful, especially for cats, to use a calming pheromone spray in their carrier around 30 minutes prior to putting them inside. Pheromones don't calm all cats but they shouldn't hurt them either. "Feliway" is a trusted brand that can be found at most pet stores.

Car rides are stressful and can be nauseating. While in the car with your pet, try to keep the volume low and speak softly, you can even consider playing soft classical music. Once they enter the hospital, there will be other dogs and cats and it will be noisy. The more you can do to keep things relaxed before surgery, the easier their day will be. It will hopefully help you relax as well!

**REMEMBER TO LEAVE YOUR PET IN THE CAR WHEN YOU GET TO THE CLINIC.** We recommend that you come in to go over paperwork and make any payments needed PRIOR to bringing your pet in to the clinic. Due to the large volume of people filling out paperwork it is more stressful on both you and your pet to have them in the lobby while filling out paperwork. Owners tend to be distracted while filling out paperwork and dogs are more likely to get into fights or attempt to attack cats that are in the lobby. If you would like to have a faster check in process, we recommend paying for your appointment in full and bringing in all paperwork already filled out. This allows you to take advantage of the fast paced check in.

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