



Does your small mammal need surgery?

While many of the FAQs on our surgical handout apply to all surgical patients, our small mammal patients have some key differences from our canine and feline patients when it comes to surgery and anesthesia.

Small Mammal Surgical FAQs:

1. Which small mammals does East Padden Animal Hospital provide surgical services for?

We offer surgical services for most small mammals, including rabbits, ferrets, guinea pigs, rats, hamsters, chinchillas, hedgehogs, and sugar gliders. If your small mammal is not listed, please call us to confirm that we can see your pet.

2. What surgeries can the doctors perform for small mammals?

We perform most routine surgeries including: dentistry, spay, neuter, mass removal, cystotomy, and laceration repair.

3. Do I need to fast my small mammal need before surgery?

No! Please continue feeding your pet normally before surgery. It is important to bring your pet's normal diet so we can feed them while they are with us. Many small mammals must continue eating right up until surgery, for those who need minimal fasting, we will take care of that here.

4. Why isn't preoperative bloodwork required for small mammals?

While preoperative bloodwork is recommended, we don't require it for small mammals because sometimes, due to how small their veins are, we are unable to collect the blood. Additionally, sometimes it can be more stressful for the patient to have blood drawn, outweighing the benefit. If you do elect for bloodwork, it will be refunded at discharge if we are unable to complete it.

5. Why are IV fluids not included in the cost for small mammal surgery?

For the exact same reasons that we do not require preoperative bloodwork. IV fluids are recommended for the benefit of direct access to a vein in the event of an emergency, and for hydration. However, they are not required to pursue surgery for your small mammal. We DO include subcutaneous fluids with all of our small mammal surgeries to aid in hydration.

6. What is Critical Care, and why is it on my estimate?

Critical care is a nutritional supplement for small mammals. It comes in an herbivore and a carnivore blend. It helps prevent nutritional deficiencies and supports the recovery process after anesthesia. It is essential that small mammals begin eating as soon as possible after anesthesia. You are not required to purchase this product in order to pursue surgery, however it is highly recommended to have on hand. If your pet is not eating within 1-2 hours of getting home, please start offering the critical care, and notify us. Your pet should be eating and defecating normally within 6 hours

of returning home.

7. How do I use critical care?

Shake well before using. Mix 1 part Critical Care with 2 parts warm water to the desired consistency. The volume of water may be adjusted depending on feeding method. Mix more water to make a thinner consistency that is easy to offer by syringe. Mix less water to make a thicker consistency that can be offered in a bowl. Water should be available to your pet at all times. Prepare fresh at each feeding; discard after 24 hours. Store in a cool, dry place. For more precise preparation directions, visit www.oxbowvetconnect.com.

8. What does post-surgery look like?

We'll call you as soon as your pet wakes up and let you know when you can pick him or her up. Your pet may be extra sleepy from the anesthesia: this should wear off within 48 hours. Prior to, or at pick up, we will provide personalized home care instructions on food, medications, activities, and recheck instructions.

- Please be aware that small mammals must be cage restricted indoors for 10-14 days to minimize activity during recovery, please provide plenty of enrichment to keep your small mammal focused on something other than their incision!
- We recommend use of a recovery suit or sweater to cover incision, and/or chewing deterrents such as bitter apple or LickGuard. These discourage licking/chewing and they must not be applied directly to the incision, but rather alongside it.

9. What are the risks with anesthesia/surgery?

Gastric Stasis: The slowing or cessation of normal movement of the digestive tract. It is a serious and potentially life-threatening condition. Rabbits have a higher risk of gastrointestinal changes after anesthesia. It is reported less in Guinea pigs. Other small mammals, such as chinchillas, may also experience gastrointestinal issues, but the prevalence and severity of gastric stasis can vary among species.

Dehiscence: The opening of part or the all of the incision, usually related to self-trauma, inflammation and movement of the area. Please return to the hospital for evaluation if you see the surgery site open up. Depending on the size and condition of the area we may need to re-suture or wait for it to heal more slowly through a process known as second intention.

Please see our accompanying handout for additional risks and complications.

10. Will my pet need to come back to be re-checked?

Your pet may need to come back for a re-check depending on the type of surgical procedure and how well they are healing. We will let you know when your pet is discharged.

- If you're worried about the incision or surgical site, bring your pet in for a complimentary recheck or send us a picture to make sure things are healing appropriately.
- If your pet has a reduced appetite, abnormal defecation, or is excessively quiet, please call immediately.
- Please note that while surgery rechecks are complimentary, there will be a cost for any treatments and medications recommended by the doctor.