



Anesthetic Risks and Surgical Complications

At East Padden Animal Hospital, we strive to minimize risks in multiple ways. We do a thorough physical exam of your pet before administering anesthetics, as well as pre-anesthetic blood testing to ensure the liver and kidneys can handle the anesthetic. We adjust the amount and type of anesthetic used depending on the health of your pet. For geriatric or ill pets, additional blood tests, electrocardiograms, or x-rays may be required before surgery as well. Despite all of this, there will always be potential risks anytime a pet goes under anesthesia.

Anesthetic Risks:

Anesthetic Dysphoria: A state of discomfort, restlessness, or agitation that may occur during the recovery phase after anesthesia. It is characterized by restlessness/pacing, vocalization, abnormal behavior such as hiding, fear or aggression. This can be normal for up to 48 hours and often confused with pain. If these signs occur longer than 48 hours, please notify us.

Aspiration: The inhalation of material, such as stomach contents or oral secretions, into the respiratory tract. If aspiration occurs, it can lead to respiratory distress, pneumonia, and in rare cases death.

Anaphylaxis: A severe and potentially life-threatening allergic reaction characterized by difficulty breathing due to throat swelling.

Death: While rare, it is important to note that death IS a potential risk for any anesthetic and surgical procedure.

In addition to potential anesthetic risks, surgery itself carries risks and potential complications.

Surgical Complications

Infection: signs like discoloration or discharge from the incision site may be an indication of contamination and infection. Early detection of any discharge or skin redness over the incision will help to treat it promptly and avoid further problems. Please return to the hospital if you see any of these signs.

Dehiscence: this term is used to describe the opening of part or the all of the incision. It is usually related to 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.

Seroma: is the collection of fluid in the incision or under the areas that were compromised during surgery. They usually look like small or medium size balls underneath the skin. Bring her back so we can treat her. They are highly related to movement over the incision site, so keeping her confined and placing a compression bandage may be necessary.

Bleeding:

- **Hemorrhage:** Excessive bleeding from the surgical site can occur, leading to complications. This can be a result of poor clotting, vessel injury, or other factors. Please seek immediate veterinary care if you suspect hemorrhage.
- **Bruising or Hematoma Formation:** Accumulation of blood under the skin, known as a hematoma, can occur and may require drainage. Treatment includes cold compresses to reduce swelling. Excessive activity and failure to wear the provided Elizabethan collar significantly increase your pet's risk of this complication.

Gastrointestinal Issues: including Nausea, Vomiting, or Diarrhea: Changes in gastrointestinal function may occur as a reaction to surgery, anesthesia, or medications. For all of our surgeries, we include an anti-nausea injection that lasts for 24 hours to help mitigate this complication. Constipation or loose stools are considered normal for a day or two following surgery, however if it lasts longer than 48 hours, your pet is straining to defecate, or it becomes diarrhea please call us at 360-892-1500.

*****Remember for 2 weeks following surgery, if you have a concern related to that surgery, we include a free recheck exam to check in. So please do not hesitate to bring any concerns to our attention. (There may be additional fees for medications, or other needed services).***