

FAQ After Surgery

- **My pet has not been eating since having surgery. What can I do?**
 - **Dogs**
 - If your dog normally eats dry kibble and won't eat, try mixing some canned food with the dry.
 - Try Hills Prescription Diet A/D (available @ Veterinary Hospital)
 - Try mixing some low sodium chicken or beef broth to enhance the flavor.
 - Try hand feeding, put food in mouth to stimulate appetite.
 - Warming food slightly in microwave will make food more aromatic. Be sure food is not hot to the touch. It should only be luke warm.
 - You can offer a 1:1 ratio of protein and carbohydrate that is low in fat and cooked. **Protein** (lean ground beef with the grease drained off, chicken or turkey without the skin) and a **carbohydrate** (white rice, potato or pasta).
 - Try baby food such as chicken, beef, turkey, or veal. Avoid foods with onion powder or garlic powder.
 - **Cats**
 - Try feeding canned food or tuna packed in water.
 - Try Hills A/D (available @ Veterinary Hospital).
 - Petting or stroking your cat will sometimes stimulate appetite.
 - Warming food slightly in microwave will make food more aromatic. Be very careful food is not hot to the touch, cats can be very sensitive and you could inadvertently cause food aversion if too hot. Food should only be luke warm.
 - Try baby food such as chicken, beef, turkey or veal. Avoid foods with onion powder or garlic powder.
 - Try placing food in your cat's mouth or on the nose to stimulate appetite.
 - If your cat is not eating for longer than 1-2 days, please call. There are appetite stimulants that can be helpful.
 - Cats with anorexia for an extended period of time can be in danger of serious liver problems such as Hepatic Lipidosis and should not be ignored.
- **Why hasn't my pet had a bowel movement since being home?**
 - It is normal for your dog to not have a bowel movement for 4-5 days after surgery.

- Some of the reasons for your pet not to have a regular bowel movement after surgery are:
 - Your pet has been fasted prior to surgery and some animals do not eat well during the hospital stay.
 - They may not eat well when they go home.
 - Some pain medications that contain narcotics (morphine, fentanyl patches, tramadol) can be constipating.
- If your pet has not had a bowel movement of the 5th day of being home, you can feed Metamucil (1 tsp per 55lbs).

- **My pet has been vomiting since having surgery. What should I do?**
 - First determine if your pet is vomiting or regurgitating.
 - Both will bring up fluid and/ or food.
 - Vomiting will usually involve retching or heaving. **Please call to report vomiting.**
 - Regurgitating is not associated with retching. The animal will usually just open the mouth and expel food or fluid.
 - Causes of vomiting after surgery:
 - Stomach upset from anesthesia can cause vomiting and will usually pass after 24-48 hours.
 - Sometimes after animals go home from surgery, they will drink too much water too fast and then regurgitate. If this happens just give your pet smaller amounts of water at a time, several times per day.
 - Some medications such as antibiotics or pain medications can cause stomach upset and vomiting after surgery. It is usually best to give medications with a meal to avoid stomach upset, unless directed otherwise.
 - **If your pet is vomiting for longer than 24 hours please call to schedule a recheck exam.**
 - **If your pet has had a surgery involving the intestines or stomach, call immediately as vomiting can be a sign of peritonitis (an infection in the abdomen) and can be very serious.**
 - Causes of regurgitating after surgery:
 - The most common reason for regurgitation following a surgery is caused by acid reflux while under anesthesia. The acid reflux can cause esophagitis (heart burn). Usually esophagitis will resolve in 2 or 3 days. Please call if condition persists.

- **Is it okay if my pet is licking the incision?**

- It is *never* okay for an animal to lick their incision and should not be ignored.
 - It is a myth that licking a wound helps the healing process. Licking actually delays the healing process.
 - Licking can cause an infection as the mouth does have many bacteria.
 - Licking can remove the sutures or staples and cause the incision to open.
 - If your pet is licking the incision, they need to come in immediately to be fitted for an E collar.
 - **If the incision gets infected or is opened, there will be extra expenses for hospital visits, wound management, and possible medications.**
- **How do I know if my pet is in pain following surgery?**
 - Your pet has most likely been sent home with some form of pain medication, usually an oral NSAID (Non Steroidal Anti Inflammatory Drug), a Fentanyl patch, or both.
 - Most pets are comfortable with the pain medications prescribed, but pain tolerance can vary (just like people).
 - Signs of pain in **dogs** include:
 - Crying
 - Panting
 - Restlessness, pacing, unable to sleep
 - Anxious facial expression
 - Biting or snapping if touched
 - Signs of pain in **cats** include:
 - Biting if surgery site touched
 - Crying, growling
 - Hiding (cats will sometimes hide because they are upset about leaving home, this may not necessarily mean they are in pain)
 - Not wanting to eat
 - If your pet has had an orthopedic surgery, applying a cold pack to the surgical area for 10-15 minutes 3 times per day will help numb the area and reduce pain.
 - You can use a cold gel pack, frozen bag of peas, or a ziplock filled with ice.
 - Be sure to use a barrier, such as a towel, between the cold pack and the skin.
- **It is very important to us that your pet has a smooth recovery from surgery. Please don't hesitate to call if you have any questions **563-386-1445**.**