Lynchburg Spay/Neuter Clinic

Post-Operative Instructions: Feral Cats

For the safety of you and your cat(s), we recommend that you carefully follow these post-operative instructions.

1. **Keep the cat in its carrier or trap until it can move around normally.** The cat can injure itself, you, or your property if released too soon. Its coordination is hindered by anesthesia, so it will not be able to jump or climb normally until the anesthesia wears off completely.
2. **Prepare a warm, dry, draft-free, sheltered area for the cat after surgery.** Cats recovering from anesthesia are unable to regulate their body temperature normally and are especially susceptible to hot and cold weather. If the cat becomes too hot or cold, it may have a prolonged recovery or even die. Keep the recovery area warm, ideally near 85 degrees. The cat's normal temperature is around 100 degrees, so it can become chilled in a 70-degree room. In cooler temperatures, cover the traps loosely with towels or sheets to trap warm air and for security.

Make sure there is ample ventilation in hot weather to avoid overheating. Place newspaper or plastic on the floor to catch urine, stool, and food that will fall from the trap. If the trap is on a cold floor (ex: garage), place a thick towel or blanket under the trap to maintain warmth. Bricks or other objects may be used to elevate the trap, so cats are not sitting in their waste. Keep noise, activity, and bright light to a minimum.

3. **Water and food:** If the cat is alert and you have safe access, provide water in a way that won't spill and get the cat or bedding wet. For cats over 4 pounds, provide canned food when the cat is fully awake. For cats/kittens less than 4 pounds, provide a small amount (1tbsp) of canned food as soon as the cat is awake enough to sit up. Provide additional canned food 2-3 hours later.
4. The **sutures** in the incisions are absorbable and do not require removal.
5. **DO NOT** give aspirin, Tylenol, or ibuprofen to your cats for pain relief. These drugs are very toxic (even deadly) to your cats. Your cats received a treatment of pain medication lasting 4 days after surgery.
6. **Safe release:** Unless otherwise instructed on the medical record, release the cat the day after surgery. Cats on medications may be kept longer if they can be kept safely. Stress may hinder recovery, so early release may be more important than treatment for many cats. If a female is lactating (noted on the medical record), release her as soon as she is fully awake, moving around easily, and showing normal behavior. We recommend feeding her before releasing. Releasing females right away is not ideal, but the kittens may die if the queen is kept for 24 hours or longer.
7. **Normal outcomes in the first 24 hours after anesthesia/surgery:** head bobbing, wobbly movements, drooling, shivering, mild bleeding from ear tip, mild bleeding from scrotum of neutered males, and mild swelling of incisions of females. These behaviors should resolve within 24 hours. **Do not release cats that are unable to stand or walk on their own!**
8. **Abnormal outcomes after anesthesia/surgery:** continued excessive bleeding from the surgical site, profuse bleeding from the tip of the left ear, pale gums, difficulty breathing, failure to stay awake, excessive swelling of the incision, or tissue hanging from the incision. **Call us (434-207-2612) during business hours (Mon-Thurs, 7am-4pm) if you see any of these signs**. **Seek veterinary attention immediately if you do not reach us.** As a courtesy service, we will attempt to treat complications arising directly from surgery whenever possible. We will not be responsible for charges incurred if cats are taken elsewhere for treatment or for illness/injuries not directly related to surgery. Treatment for adverse reactions to anesthesia or complications resulting from poor recovery techniques will be the responsibility of the caretaker.
9. For other questions about your cats' health or for illnesses/emergencies not related to surgery, contact your regular veterinarian or the nearest emergency hospital. Our emergency number is for surgical complications arising in the immediate post-operative period only.