

What happens when your pet comes in for surgery?



We understand that when your pet has surgery it can be a worrying time for you as owners. At Henley House we will do everything we can to help make it as straightforward as we can for you and your pet.

On the morning of your pet's surgery you will have an admission appointment with a veterinary surgeon. They will give your pet a full health check including weighing them and discuss the procedure with you. Pre-anaesthetic blood sampling and intra-operative fluids will also be discussed with you at this time, explaining if these are likely to be needed for your pet. If you have any questions regarding the procedure, please feel free to ask the vet. We will discuss the anaesthetic and go through a consent form with you. You are welcome to bring a teddy or blanket for your pet to have with them throughout their stay with us.

Your pet will then be taken to the surgical area, where there will be a qualified veterinary nurse ready and waiting for your pet, who will look after them for the day. There will be a comfy bed made up, which will be theirs for the day.

If pre anaesthetic bloods are required, the sample will be collected soon after admission and these will be run in house, giving us the results in minutes.

The time when your pet will have their procedure depends on what the procedure is. Surgical procedures such as neuterings and orthopaedic operations will be first, and procedures with possible bacterial involvement, such as dentistry will be at the end of the operating list. About 40 minutes prior to their procedure your pet will be given a pre-medication via injection which includes pain relief and a light sedative to make the anaesthetic smoother for them.

When it is their turn, their nurse will look after them throughout. As standard an intravenous catheter will be placed in their vein on one of their front legs to enable the anaesthetic to be given. This also maintains access to the blood supply throughout the procedure. Some hair on the leg will be clipped for this. Once they are asleep a tube is placed down their windpipe to allow oxygen and anaesthetic to be given, as the injected anaesthetic will only last for a few minutes.

Once they are asleep and settled, a qualified nurse will continually monitor them throughout their procedure, recording heart rate, breathing rate, gum colour, temperature and checking their reflexes to assess the anaesthetic. They will be placed on heat pads and kept warm with the bair hugger (a hot air inflated blanket). A second theatre nurse will clip the hair away from the surgical site and prepare the area with a surgical scrub.

Throughout the procedure, the qualified nurse will monitor the patient extremely closely to ensure they are comfortably anaesthetised. Once the procedure is completed, they will be woken up gradually, by turning the anaesthetic off but keeping the oxygen on. The tube down their windpipe is removed once they start to swallow on their own.

The nurse will continue to monitor them whilst they wake up fully and ensure they are kept snugly and warm in their bed. There are always plenty of nurses around to offer cuddles. Once they are fully awake they will be offered some late breakfast, and a nurse will contact you to let you know how they are and arrange a home time. Dogs will be taken outside for some fresh air and to open their bowels/bladder if necessary later on.

All the time your pet is with us they are closely monitored and reassured. We all have pets ourselves at Henley House and understand your worry about leaving them, so will always help you and them feel reassured.

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