

Surgery - General Information

Prior to any drugs being administered, Dr. Leah gives each animal a physical examination. Your pet is carefully checked for abnormal teeth, problems with the ears, and any lumps or bumps. She listens to the heart for evidence of a murmur or irregular beats, which may cause problems when your pet is anesthetized. Finally, the sex of your pet is confirmed, and males are double checked for both testicles in the correct position.

If any abnormalities are detected, she will contact the pet's owner and discuss the problem and solution.

Your pet will be given a mild sedative, which will help her to relax. There is also a pain-killer (analgesic) in the shot so she will be more comfortable after the surgery.

The technician and assistant inject a small amount of anesthetic into one of the veins in the leg. This anesthetic will help your pet to relax fully so she can be given the gas anesthetic.

We use only isoflurane mixed with oxygen for gas anesthesia. Isoflurane is the safest inhaled anesthetic that is available. It is a little more expensive, but we feel that safety is priceless when it comes to your pet.

The isoflurane is breathed in by your pet by way of an endotracheal tube, a hollow tube placed in the airway. The technician carefully monitors the proper mix of isoflurane and oxygen during surgery.

Once your pet is fully anesthetized, the technician will shave the area for surgery (in this case the belly is being shaved for a spay). The fur is removed and the surgical area is scrubbed with a special disinfectant soap. After the scrub your pet is moved into the operating room where she is placed on the table in the correct position, and alcohol and an iodine spray is applied to the skin before the surgeon begins.

While this has been happening, the surgeon (Dr. Leah) is preparing herself for surgery. She washes her hands very carefully with a special disinfectant soap before putting on the sterile surgical gown and gloves. Notice she is wearing a cap and mask - just like in a human hospital, it is important that there are no germs in the surgery!

The technician has prepared the surgical instruments necessary for the procedure. Each instrument pack is individually cleaned, dried, wrapped and then sterilized in a steam autoclave. We use one pack of instruments for each animal - there is no sharing allowed!

A sterile cloth, called a drape, is placed over your pet. The drape has a hole in the middle through which Dr. Leah will perform the surgery. The drape keeps the hair out of the surgical area during the procedure, and is held in place by special clamps.

After surgery is finished, the isoflurane is stopped and your pet will breathe pure oxygen for several minutes, until she begins to wake up. She is placed in a warmed recovery area and

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watched closely until she can sit up, and then goes back to her ward with a snuggly blanket to rest until it is time to go home.