

POST-OPERATIVE CARE OF ANIMALS

There is a regulatory requirement for post-operative monitoring of animals following anesthesia and surgery. The investigator is responsible for monitoring and recording post-operative care for 5 days. All observations and treatments are to be recorded on the surgery sheet, which shall remain outside room A-606. If needed, Veterinary Services may provide post-operative care, which is charged at an hourly rate. To arrange for Veterinary Services to provide post-operative monitoring, please turn in a Special Service Request form to room F-608.

The post-operative period can be divided into two phases: anesthetic recovery phase and long term post-op care. CAS personnel may assist in providing care during the anesthetic recovery phase.

Anesthetic Recovery Phase:

1. Animals should be placed in a clean, dry, quiet environment where they can be observed closely and continuously while they recover from anesthesia. Animals in lateral recumbancy should be turned over every 30 minutes until they regain sternal recumbancy.
2. All food, water bowls and any other physical hazards should be removed from the cage where the animal is recovering.
3. Temperature, pulse, and respiration should be monitored every 15 minutes or more often if necessary. Water circulating heating pads, blankets or other heat sources should be used to help restore an optimal body temperature following anesthesia and surgery.
4. Extubate animal when it regains coughing and swallowing reflexes.
5. When animal regains sternal recumbency it may be returned to the housing room.

Long-term post-op care:

1. On day zero record the surgery date on cage card and place a red sedation / anesthesia card on cage.
2. Small amounts of water may be given once the animal has recovered from anesthesia.
3. Following major surgery, (extensive dissection of soft tissues, major entry into the pleural or peritoneal cavity, intraocular surgery, orthopedic or dental surgery or dissection into joints), monitor and record the animal's temperature once daily on days 1 and 2 post-op. If the temperature is normal on day 2, temperature monitoring may be discontinued. For abnormal temperatures submit a Sick Animal Report to Veterinary Services (see chart on right).
4. Check and record the condition of the surgical incision at least once daily for any swelling, drainage, signs of dehiscence or infection.
5. Observe and record the animal's attitude and appearance, food and water intake, urination and defecation.
6. Inform Veterinary Services of any concerns or signs of illness using a Sick Animal Report. Please provide any information concerning complications during that animal's surgical procedure.
7. Analgesics and other medications should be given as prescribed by your protocol and written on the surgical.
8. Provide date, time, as well as initials on all post-op entries.
9. Skin sutures or staples should be removed between 10-14 days post-op.

*ALL post-op notes must be recorded on the animal's surgery sheet by 9:00 am. If no entry is made by **9:00 am**, Veterinary Services personnel will provide post-op care and appropriate charges made.

Please address any questions about an animal's condition to Veterinary Services 206-543-6257. The Veterinarian on call may be reached at digital pager 206-583-1853.