

Pre-Operative Care



CARNFORTH
pet care

At some time in their life your pet may need to have some kind of sedation or anaesthetic for an operation or procedure. Many people worry about anaesthetics and although all operations and anaesthetics do carry some degree of risk, we will do everything to make sure these are as low as possible. For your peace of mind, it is important that you know what to expect and we are happy to talk you through everything.

For most procedures your pet will need a full, or general, anaesthetic which means they will be unconscious and completely unaware of anything that is being done and will feel no pain during the procedure. While others may only need a sedation, such as for x-rays, which helps them to relax without the need for a full anaesthetic. There are things you can do before and after the procedure to help keep the risks down and allow your pet to recover quickly and comfortably.

Preparation

All patients booked in for a planned operation first see one of our vets for a short appointment that morning. This allows you to discuss any concerns with the vet, or to ask questions as the procedure is explained. We will ask for a contact number to be able to update you on your pet's condition and to arrange a discharge appointment later that day.

Please consider whether you would like your pet to undergo any additional procedures such as microchipping, ear cleaning, anal sac emptying or nail clipping whilst under anaesthetic. A reduced fee will be charged.

We can also offer the following:

- Pre-anaesthetic blood test (more information below)
- Intravenous fluids during the procedure (recommended in all surgeries that are anticipated to last 30 minutes or longer and in older animals)

Dogs

- It is important that dogs have not eaten in the morning of their anaesthetic, and so we request that dogs do not have access to food from midnight of the night before. They need to have an empty stomach for their safety so that there is a reduced risk of vomiting and associated complications while under anaesthesia.
- Allow access to water until you come to the admission appointment.
- Take your dog for a short walk on a lead so that he/she is able to go to the toilet before coming to us.
- Please make sure your dog is clean, you might need to give them a bath so they are not bringing soil on their coats into our theatre.

Cats

- Cats also cannot eat during the morning of their anaesthetic, and so we request that they do not have access to food from midnight of the night before.
- Therefore, please keep cats inside the night before an operation to prevent overnight hunting or them not appearing on the morning of the procedure.





Rabbits and other smaller animals

- It is really important for the rabbit's recovery to keep eating and drinking as usual prior to an anaesthetic.
- As a result, please offer food and water as normal. When possible, we request that you bring a small amount of your pet's favourite food to the admission appointment to help ensure that your rabbit continues to eat whilst with us.

Pre-anaesthetic blood test

Any animal undergoing an operation under anaesthetic will be offered the chance to have a pre-anaesthetic blood test. This is a simple blood test to check your pet is fit and healthy to have the anaesthetic.

After admission he/she will have a small volume of blood taken and it will be tested in our in-house laboratory; the results will be available for interpretation within 15 minutes. We are especially keen to perform this test in patients 7 years or older (younger in large/giant breeds). As our pets age, so do their organs and we like to know how well they are working before we use anaesthetic and pain relieving drugs.

What do we test for?

Principally we are testing for adequate liver and kidney function. These two organs are primarily responsible for metabolising and eliminating the drugs from the body. We can also check your pet is not anaemic, dehydrated nor diabetic. If any abnormality shows up, we will correct the condition at the time e.g. placing your pet on fluid support before the operation to correct dehydration or we will postpone the operation and call you to inform you of our findings so we can discuss the next step to help your pet.

By taking the blood sample and gaining this additional information, you can be reassured we are making the procedure as safe as possible by minimising the attendant risks.

An additional benefit to having the blood test is that it can act as benchmark of how the organs were at that time. If, for example, your pet becomes unwell at some future date, we can look back and compare the results. Again this all helps us build a picture of what is happening to your pet over and above that gained during the physical exam.

Prices

Pre-anaesthetic blood test:

- Haematology (red and white blood cells) £36
- Biochemistry (organ function) £42





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Intravenous Fluid Therapy

All patients at Carnforth Pet Care are offered the opportunity of intravenous fluid therapy (IVFT) during their operation. While we monitor patients very closely using the most up-to-date machines, providing IVFT allows us to stabilise the circulation and keep blood pressure as optimal as possible throughout. In this way we protect our patients from the harmful effects of inadequate organ perfusion.

This is less of a concern in young, healthy patients undergoing relatively short procedures e.g. dog castrates, cat neutering. However in more lengthy operations, in older patients, procedures where we anticipate blood loss etc, we strongly recommend IVFT and will discuss this option with you during your admission appointment.

Collecting Your Pet

If we haven't already made a discharge appointment, we will arrange the best time during the telephone update on their progress.

While your pet is away from home make sure everything is ready for them when they come back. Organise transport and consider whether you might need an extra pair of hands getting your pet in or out of the car. Your pet might still be drowsy and any amount of walking can be tiring and is not recommended. At home, provide them a comfortable bed away from draughts and if your pet has had surgery, jumping onto furniture or going upstairs will be difficult so try to avoid this.

Depending on the procedure, exercise may need to be restricted for a few days. Generally this means cats should be kept indoors and dogs only short lead walks. Exercise and rest instructions are very important, especially after orthopaedic surgery.

Please check the wound daily for any pain, swelling or signs of infection and contact the practice if you are worried. It is important to prevent them or other pets from licking the wound as this can cause irritation and infection which could require further treatment. We recommend the use of a buster collar or similar deterrent to prevent this.

Bandages must be kept clean, dry and checked daily for signs of swelling above or below the bandage, or for any discharges or unpleasant smells.

Make sure you give any medication provided at the correct dose and that you finish the course.

