

The Anaesthetic Procedure

Follow-up

We always like to do a post-operative check several days after the anaesthetic, to make sure that all is well. This may be with either a vet or a nurse.

Out of hours

If you have any concerns about your pet following an operation, you can contact our emergency service throughout the night and weekends on 01782 417882.

If this leaflet fails to answer any of your concerns,
please do not hesitate to ask.



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Your pet's operation – the bluehouse guide

General anaesthetics are something we all worry about but with modern techniques, drugs and practices most anaesthetics are actually very safe procedures, with few complications.

This booklet aims to re-assure you about your pets anaesthetic, and to explain the 'whys-and-wherefores' behind everything that we do.

Each section carries several paragraphs of explanation, followed by a number of bulleted do's and dont's. If you do not have time to study these explanations, please read the bullet points!

Admission

- Starve your pet overnight or as instructed
- Leave water down overnight
- Allow plenty of time for admission
- Toilet your dog before arrival
- Bring your insurance details if your pet is insured
- Bring their favourite toy, bedding if you wish, and a snack

Time of admission

We admit most of our patients on the morning of their operation and aim to have them home with you on the same day. This is much less stressful for both you and your pets, but we realise that this is not always convenient.

We are always happy to admit patients on the night before their operation if it is difficult for you to get to the surgery between 8.00 and 9.00 am.

We can always admit patients later than this by arrangement.

Quality equipment

We have an advanced 'wet' X ray developer available, giving us 'archive-dry' X ray plates in just 90 seconds! – and our modern make of X ray machine is found in a number of veterinary schools. This translates into reliable and speedy X rays and less time under anaesthetic.

Recovery

Our dog ward has been constructed to be a thoroughfare, so that staff are constantly checking your pet whilst it recovers. For our smaller patients, we use intensive care units for recovery – thermostatically controlled, temperature regulated units with an oxygen feed for the critical patient.

Collecting your pet

When we discharge your pet, we like to give you a full explanation of everything we have done. Please allow enough time for this. Also, feel free to bring along a list of any queries or concerns you may have.

Do note that it is not advisable to walk your dog home after an anaesthetic.

Overnight hospitalisation

If your pet is not ready to go home at the end of the working day, we will normally suggest that it be hospitalised at our emergency clinic in Stoke. This is manned throughout the night by both a vet and a trained nurse who give proper round-the-clock attention. It is usual for you to drop your pet off there yourself, and collect it the following morning before 8.00 am.

Admittance

We will go through a number of checks when we admit your pet, and it helps both parties if you come prepared (biggest problem for most people is their mobile phone number!)

The questions we ask include:

- Home/work/mobile telephone numbers
- Insurance details
- Any important health matters we may not be aware of, or need to be reminded of
- Any known drug intolerances/allergies
- Any issues with the animal's temperament (e.g. some bull terriers will not tolerate being caged!)

Please attend at the appointed time if possible, though we do appreciate that it is not always easy during the rush-hour.

We are always willing to be flexible if our admittance times create difficulties. Cats can be admitted the night before, and we can also admit pets later than 9.00 am on special request.

If your pet is anxious, and particularly if it has had a bad experience at the vets before, we recommend that you stop with it whilst it is sedated. When indicated, we can even arrange for you to stop with your pet until we give the anaesthetic. Please let us know if you feel this is necessary, as this does require careful planning.

We usually admit pets in the morning, and discharge them in the afternoon, again by appointment. For anxious, over-exuberant or noisy pets, we are always happy to phone you, so that you can collect them as soon as they are properly round from their anaesthetic.

A safe anaesthetic

No anaesthetic is ever risk free, for your pets or for people. However there are a number of steps we take to minimise these risks.

- Pre-anaesthetic blood tests
- Full clinical examination
- Safe drugs
- Intravenous catheterisation
- Anaesthetic monitoring
- Experienced trained staff
- Monitored recovery

Pre-anaesthetic blood tests

We usually recommend a blood screen prior to every anaesthetic in dogs and cats, and this is particularly important in geriatric and younger pets. For the healthy middle-aged pet this is less important but we do still find the odd animal with undetected disease. Is it any reassurance to know that you are the one in a thousand exceptions to the rule?

An 'abnormal' blood result does not necessarily mean cancelling the planned operation, but where we have concerns about results, we will always contact you and discuss the implications before proceeding. For example, if a cat is found to have mild kidney failure, we may continue after giving a 'drip' (fluid therapy). We also tend to drip any older or debilitated pet, and for long procedures such as extensive dentals and bone surgery.

Clinical examination

All pets are subject to a health examination if this has not already been recently performed.

Protocols and choice of drugs

We choose our anaesthetic agents on efficacy, familiarity and safety rather than cost. For the technically minded, we usually premedicate with Vetergesic and ACP, induce with Propofol, and maintain on Isoflurane.

Intravenous catheters

We place catheters into the vein for virtually all operations, allowing us to administer drugs rapidly and directly into the bloodstream in case of any unforeseen need.

Anaesthetic monitoring

During the anaesthetic, we monitor your pet in a number of ways. Physical examination is paramount, and our nurses record essential indicators such as heart and breathing rates. For longer or complex procedures we use an advanced and rather expensive electronic monitor which precisely tracks blood gas levels (pulse oximetry and capnography), cardiac and respiratory rates.

Staff expertise

All our clinical staff are fully qualified and possess years of experience.

You can be assured that your pet is always in capable and experienced hands.

Hurrying to work?

Our admittance procedure is very thorough and takes about 10 minutes. Please allow yourself plenty of time, as it is not just a case of dropping off your pet and leaving it with us. If you are in a hurry to get to work, please let us know and we will try and minimise any delay.

Overnight fasting

Unless instructed otherwise, you should not feed your pet the morning of an anaesthetic. Feed them the previous evening, leaving them with water overnight, removing this first thing in the morning. Please note that bunnies and guinea pigs should not be starved overnight.

Poop first

You may exercise your pet as normal the night before the operation, and it would be appreciated if you would take your dog for a short stroll for toileting before coming to bluehouse.

Payment and Insurance

All procedures are to be paid for when you collect your pet. If your pet is insured, please also bring any insurance details you have, so that we help you to make your claim quickly and efficiently. It can also be a good idea to inform your insurance company of the operation prior to admission, minimising the risk of subsequent problems.

Afternoon Tea

We like our patients to have something to eat once they are up and around after their anaesthetic. If your pet has any specific food requirements, please bring their favoured meal with them.