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ANESTHESIA: WHAT TO EXPECT

Administration of general anesthesia is always associated with a small, but inherent risk of complications irrespective of whether the patient is a human or a cat or dog. Patients are examined and a blood sample is evaluated prior to induction of general anesthesia; additional pre-anesthesia testing may also be performed depending on the patient's age and/or health status. The purpose of such testing is to confirm that the patient is well enough to undergo general anesthesia and to detect any underlying medical issues that might justify changes to the medications that will be administered.

The veterinarian and/or a licensed veterinary technician will explain the proposed anesthetic plan and the goals of the procedure to you. Please ask any questions you have about your pet's overall health status and what the risks are before you authorize your consent to have your pet undergo general anesthesia.

Pre-anesthesia evaluation will include:

- Review of the prior medical history including the patient's age, breed, and temperament
- Obtain an accurate body weight
 - If the patient is significantly overweight, anesthetic drugs will be based upon the estimated lean body weight and not the actual weight of the patient.
- Evaluate the procedure's level of invasiveness, anticipated pain, risk of hemorrhage (bleeding) or hypothermia (decreased body temperature)
- Consider the best type of anesthesia and post-operative medications to create an individual anesthesia plan for your pet

To help reduce the risk of complications, it is very important that you follow the directions of the veterinary team, especially regarding patient preparation.

Before the Day of the Procedure

- Follow the veterinarian's directions.
- You might be asked to change the medications you give your pet. You could be asked to skip a dose or to give a different medication.
- You will be asked to withhold food after midnight the night before (unless directed otherwise) to reduce the risk of regurgitation and aspiration (breathing in the contents of the stomach and gastric juices into the lungs).
Note! *When your pet is unconscious, the gag reflex is suppressed. Your pet could inhale stomach contents, causing serious injury, even death. Therefore, you must be very strict about withholding food (and maybe water) for the specified time if instructed to do so.*
- If your pet has diabetes, your veterinarian might not require fasting or might instruct you to adjust your pet's insulin.

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On the Day of the Procedure

Before the Procedure

The veterinary team will:

- Make sure equipment is working properly and all medications are close by.
- Prepare your pet for anesthesia.
- Calculate dosages of Emergency Medications in the unlikely event of an adverse anesthetic reaction.

During the Procedure

- A dedicated staff member will continually monitor and record vital parameter data throughout the procedure and during recovery.
- The entire team has been trained to recognize and quickly respond to any complication should one develop.
- Our staff will assess and manage your pet's potential pain level before, during, and after the procedure.

After the Procedure Prior to Patient Discharge

Our team will contact you when your pet is awake, aware, warm, and comfortable to arrange a mutually convenient time to discharge the patient from our care to yours.

At the time of patient discharge, the veterinary staff will:

- Review the procedure and how it went.
- Explain follow-up care, including when your pet can begin to eat and drink.
- Tell you when to resume current medications.
- Tell you how to give new medications, if needed.
- Explain how to recognize signs of complications in your pet. It is important that you call the veterinarian's office immediately if your pet has a complication.
- Tell you when to bring your pet back for a progress examination.
- In addition to going over your discharge instructions with you, your veterinarian or veterinary staff will provide you with a written copy for your reference.

Day After the Procedure

- A staff member will be calling to request a follow-up assessment of how your pet is feeling after the procedure.

Guidelines and Standards created by the American Animal Hospital Association (aaha.org) provide advice and recommendations that help your veterinary team provide the best medical care possible for your pet. AAHA is the only organization in the U.S. and Canada that accredits companion animal hospitals based on standards that go above and beyond state regulations.

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