

SURGERY RECOVERY INSTRUCTIONS

1. Prior to surgery, **confirm with the clinic that dissolvable sutures will be used.** This eliminates the need for a follow-up visit to remove stitches. Also confirm that the cats will be given an **antibiotic** to help prevent infection.
2. Be prepared to shelter the cats at least overnight. **Do not release the cats the day of surgery!**
3. After surgery, **cats must be kept in a warm area** indoors and **monitored** for bleeding, infection, illness and appetite. **Leave the cats in the traps or carriers in which they were placed after surgery.** The trap doors should be firmly closed and locked and the traps covered with a sheet or blanket.
4. Place the traps/carriers in a warm spare room, bathroom, or basement overnight
5. **Do not stick your fingers through the bars of a trap or otherwise attempt to touch or handle the cats.** Stray or feral cats are not vicious but, **even when apparently anesthetized,** they may react to strange people, noises, and activity, and you could be injured.
6. Look in on the cats every hour to check their progress. The cats will be groggy as they recover from anesthesia.
 - Be aware that anesthesia can have hallucinogenic effects** that cause cats to overreact to normal stimulation or to become aggressive. (See item #5.) Anesthesia will wear off in 4 to 24 hours.
 - There should be no signs of bleeding or undue distress. **If a cat is bleeding, vomiting, breathing with difficulty, or not waking up, call the veterinarian immediately.**
 - If a cat is vomiting, turn his/her head so liquid can come out. Do not place the cat back in vomit. **Wear sturdy gloves when handling the cat.** (See item #5.)
7. **Immediately after surgery, feed only kittens that are four months old or younger.** Do not feed adult cats until at least eight hours after surgery. A small amount of canned food can be placed on a plastic lid with a little water around it. The cat may not have any appetite. Be careful when opening a carrier or trap to be sure that the cat does not escape. Keep your hands out of the trap and relock the trap door. (Again, see item #5.)
8. **Both males and females should be sheltered overnight.** The morning after surgery, check that the cats are alert and clear-eyed, and do not display any signs of illness. If they appear healthy, they can be released the morning after surgery, barring inclement weather or extreme outdoor temperatures. If a female was pregnant, however, she should be held for an additional two days.
9. If you must keep the cats **longer than one night, provide both food and water.** Moist food is preferable because it is more easily digested. Feed small amounts of food at first.
10. **Release the cats at the site where they were trapped.** Provide fresh water and food. The cats may disappear for a few hours or days, but will return when they have calmed down.