

# Understanding what's involved in pet surgery

No one - neither pet nor human - likes to go under the knife. But sometimes, surgery is the right (or even only) option.

If your pet needs surgery, it's important you understand exactly what will happen during the procedure, but also what you need to do before, during and after surgery to help your precious pet make a smooth recovery.

## Why does my pet need a full anaesthetic?

Completing procedures under a general anaesthetic allows your vet to treat your animal safely, calmly and most importantly, pain-free.

As a full anaesthetic carries some risk, your vet will have carefully weighed up the various pros and cons before presenting you with this option. After all, they want the very best for your treasured pet, just as you do.



healthy pets, happy lives

Fur Life Vet provides health and wellbeing information for you to help care for your pets throughout their lives.



**GET VET  
CHECKED  
NOW**

[furlifevet.com.au](http://furlifevet.com.au)



# Surgery

What to expect and how you can help your pet recover quickly



# Before surgery

## Discuss with your vet any:

- + Queries you have about your pet's procedure.
- + Concerns about your pet's current or previous illness, particularly how that could affect the anaesthetic or surgery.
- + Additional procedures while your pet is anaesthetised, i.e. nail clipping or other grooming.
- + Do any requested preliminary blood tests (your vet may request this to get more information about your pet's health status before surgery).
- + Stick to any fasting instructions given by your vet prior to any procedure (sedation, general anaesthetic or surgery). Generally, this will be from 8pm the night before surgery.
- + Prepare a quiet, confined environment for your pet when they come home.

# During surgery

## Pre-medication

Before anything else is done, your vet will thoroughly check your furry friend is fit and healthy for surgery. If so, they will give them medication designed to calm and sedate them before the full anaesthetic is given. It's the safest option.

## General anaesthetic

**This part of the procedure begins with shaving your pet's forearm and/surgical area. It's done for two reasons:**

- + The vet can clearly see your pet's vein.
- + Cleaning the area reduces the chances of infection.

Your vet will then administer anaesthetic injection and your best mate will drift off to dreamland. The surgery can then begin.

## During surgery

Your pet will be given continuous medication throughout surgery to maintain anaesthesia. This might be done through a tube placed into their windpipe so it's possible they'll develop a slight cough after surgery due to irritation. It should settle over 48 hours.

Rest assured they will be monitored throughout the procedure to ensure the anaesthetic is proceeding safely.

## After surgery

Once the surgery is done, your precious one will be placed in a warm bed in a quiet area to recover. If they required skin sutures, the vet or nurse will let you know and give you some information about how to care for them. At this time, they'll also share details about post-operative care and schedule an important check-up revisit.

## Medication

It's likely your pet is going to need some pain relief after surgery. If so, your vet might prescribe non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs). These medications work to both relieve pain and decrease inflammation.

**As with all medications, side effects can occur. The most common side effects of NSAIDs are:**

- + Mild softening of your pet's stools.
- + Loss of appetite.
- + Vomiting.
- + Diarrhoea.
- + Bleeding into the digestive tract (not as common).

Other problems can occur but they are rare. If you suspect your pet is having problems with a medication, STOP the medication and CONTACT your vet.

# Home care after surgery

Once you get your furry loved one home, there's a few things you can do to help them recover:

## After surgery remember to:

1. **Keep them in a safe, comfortable & clean environment.**
2. **Don't let them lick or scratch their wound** (you can get an Elizabethan collar from the vet to help with this).
3. **Monitor the wound site** - a little redness, swelling & even a small amount of discharge is to be expected.
4. **Give all medications** as prescribed by your vet.
5. **Attend all scheduled revisits.**
6. **Call your vet if you have any concerns.**

## Why a revisit is so important

Your vet is the best person to judge if your pet's wound is healing normally. It's actually the main reason for a scheduled revisit. If any abnormalities are detected, they'll get quick treatment minimising the risk of further complications.

You can also use the revisit time to ask any questions you have about surgical wound care or the ongoing health of your pet.