

Consumer Guide to Elective Surgery

Thank you for recognizing the need to spay or neuter your pet. Many people "shop around" for the cheapest price on these surgeries, without the knowledge of why the cost varies among veterinary practices. This guide was put together to help you find the best fit between the veterinary practice and your expectations for the care of your cat.

Questions to Ask and Why to Ask Them

1. Will my pet receive a complete physical examination prior to surgery?

This is important for a number of reasons. It is our first defense against performing surgery on an animal that may have infectious disease, a heart murmur, or be debilitated from parasites.

2. What safety precautions will be taken with my pet during anesthesia and surgery?

While most surgery is uneventful, emergencies sometimes arise. Early detection of impending problems greatly aids our ability to intervene and correct the problem. A breathing tube should be placed on all anesthetized animals. This keeps the airway open and allows for supplemental oxygen or gas anesthesia as needed. A heart (EKG), oxygen, and blood pressure monitor allows the surgeon to keep track of heart rate and rhythm as well as the amount of oxygen in the blood. It also indicated that the blood pressure is high enough to support kidney function and supply oxygen to all vital organs. The practice should have a "crash box" handy, which contains emergency drugs and supplies.

3. What safety precautions will be taken with my pet after surgery?

Surgery patient lose body heat through anesthesia and the opening of body cavities. If patients get too cold, the heart can be affected. Patient temperature should be monitored at regular intervals after surgery and supplemental heating provided as needed. Your pet's gum color, pulse, and respiration should also be monitored.

4. How will pain be controlled for my pet?

This is very important- surgery hurts! The anesthetic will NOT provide pain control once the pet wakes up. Injectable pain medication should be administered prior to surgery, followed by oral medication for the animal to take at home.

5. Will I receive written post-surgical instructions for my pet?

Aftercare of surgical patients is very important for proper healing. The hospital should provide written discharge instructions for your pet. Expect telephone follow-up from the hospital to ensure that your pet's recovery is proceeding normally.

6. In what ways can surgical services be compromised to lower competitor's prices?

There are so many ways that corners can be cut. Although your pet may survive the procedure, greater risks may be taken. These risks are known to increase the chance of infection, pain, suffering, and death. Since there are no laws that regulate these issues in Indiana, some veterinary hospitals cut corners to be able to offer the lowest price possible. We firmly believe that the clinics that cut corners are not adequately informing their clients of the risks involved. We believe owners should have choices and should not be looked down upon if they cannot afford uncompromising care, but feel all pet owners should be informed that the lowest price probably means the lowest service. We have researched all the issues to develop our protocols. We believe our patients deserve uncompromising care.