

Components of Safe Anesthesia

You may be considering whether or not to allow your pet to undergo anesthesia because of the associated risks.

We would like to address these concerns by acquainting you with veterinary anesthesia and the tools at our disposal to help minimize risk.

A thorough history and check up are the cornerstones of safe anesthesia. Occasionally, blood tests and x-rays are needed in order to remove any guess work about early or silent medical problems. Once we have an accurate health picture, we are able to fine tune our anesthetic technique in order to ensure optimal safety.

There are far more anesthetic drugs to choose from today than there were ten years ago. Many of these drugs are the very same drugs administered to people undergoing anesthesia. This wide selection allows veterinarians to tailor an anesthetic menu to the needs of each animal to ensure smooth anesthesia, freedom from pain, quick recovery and early return home.

The drug choices include local anesthetics (such as those used by dentists), tranquilizers, pain killers and either isoflurane or sevoflurane anesthetic gases each with its own merits. Most likely, a combination of these different drugs are chosen to take advantage of the positive features of each one.

During the anesthetic period, a veterinarian or trained veterinary nurse keeps a careful watch on your pet. They make sure that patients receive warmth, oxygen and just the right amount of anesthetic. They also use monitoring devices which help assess that body functions are normal while your pet is asleep.

What are the components of safe anesthesia?

Regardless of how straightforward or brief the planned surgical procedure is, certain key components are required to reduce anesthesia risk as much as possible when your pet is undergoing general anesthesia. This is what an anesthesia fee is intended to cover. If you want the safest anesthesia possible you should ensure that:

- 1) In the days preceding anesthesia, your pet receives a comprehensive physical examination by a veterinarian including a face to face discussion about specific symptoms, previous medical history, problems with previous anesthesia and current medication/supplements
- 2) Your veterinarian should plan to place an intravenous catheter into your pet's front or hind limb for the delivery of intravenous fluids and any emergency drugs that may become necessary in the unlikely event of an anesthesia or surgical problem
- 3) A trained nurse is with your pet throughout the entire anesthesia and recovery period
- 4) Pain control needs are discussed and appropriate medication is dispensed as required
- 5) You are in touch with your veterinarian in the days following hospital discharge to ensure that recovery is proceeding as expected