



# Arizona Animal Wellness Center

## Pre-surgical plan - Orthopedic

Your pet needs veterinary treatment, and you have elected orthopedic surgery together with your veterinarian as the right treatment option for your pet. The healing process can be long and stressful, so it is best to not only understand the surgery but to be prepared before going in.

Here are some tips to consider before your pet undergoes surgery.

### **Obedience Training**

Prior to the surgery date, this is a great time to brush up on your obedience skills with your pet. Things to practice are basic commands such as sit, down, stand and stay. Stay will be important initially after the surgery so if you need to leave your pet for a moment, they will not follow you around the house. Sit, stand and down will be great after your pet has recovered and is given the okay from your veterinarian to be more active. Having your pet go from sit to down to sit to stand will be a great exercise to help maintain muscle mass.

Leash work is also an important skill to practice as your pet should only be taken out to the bathroom on a short leash. You will not want your pet to pull, either. Stay away from retractable leashes as they allow your pet to move freely without your control.

### **Prepping a Safe Healing Space**

Choose an area in the house that keeps your dog social but has limited traffic. We do not want your pet to feel secluded from you.

Make sure you have a crate ready for when you return home with your pet. The crate should be large enough for your pet to be able to stand and turn. Put lots of comfortable padding and blankets inside so they are not lying on a hard surface.

If you have slippery floors, such as hardwood, find some carpet that you can place on areas where your pet may need to walk.

If your pet reacts to the doorbell or knocking, it might be a good idea to put up a sign for guests letting them know not to ring or knock. However long you can prevent your dog from getting up abruptly will be best for their recovery. Pre-printed signs will be provided at dismissal and should be placed at all entry/exit points in the home.

### **Setting up the Car**

Along with a comfortable area at home, you will want a comfortable area in the car.

Plan to have two people to bring your pet home. It will be good to have one person to drive and one to sit with your pet to keep them calm. Depending on the size of your pet, you may need two people to lift your pet in and out of the car.

If you have a large pet it may be worth purchasing a ramp. They will need to get in and out of the car for follow-up visits and possibly rehabilitation.

### **Clean Pet**

Your pet's surgery site will be clipped, cleaned and sterilized right before heading into surgery. There will also be an area over their lower spine that will be shaved for a pain control injection. You can help the technicians by bringing in a clean pet. At your pet's pre-surgical visit, you will be sent home with Chlorhexidine Shampoo. Please follow the label directions to help prepare your pet for surgery.

### **An Empty Stomach**

Your veterinarian will advise you not to feed your pet after 10:00 p.m. the night prior to the surgery. They should not eat any treats or snacks the morning of the surgery. Feeding your pet can cause serious complications while your pet is under anesthesia. It is ok to give your pet water overnight. Your pet's surgical team will advise you on what medications are fine to give the morning of the procedure. They may send you home with some prior to surgery.

### **Care plan**

It may be a good idea to plan ahead for a day off of work or for someone to stay with your pet the day following surgery. Your pet may need close monitoring for the first 24 hours after their procedure. You will want to make sure they are comfortable and secure in their environment.

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