

1 Does my cat need medications? Perhaps. It is not uncommon that we will send your cat home with one or more medications. We often prescribe antibiotics to treat or prevent infection and/or anti-pain medications to keep your cat as comfortable as possible.

2 Can my cat go outside? In general, cats should remain indoors until their recovery is complete. This period could range from a few days, for minor procedures, up to weeks or months, for major orthopedic surgeries.

3 What are typical exercise restrictions for cats following surgery? Off-limit activities include: explosive running, jumping and playing. Most of these may be avoided by simply limiting the 'roaming' space of your cat during the recuperation period.

4 Can my cat use the litter box with a bandage? In just a few days, most cats accommodate to wearing a bandage, no matter how bulky. Ultimately, your cat needs to use the litter pan and will adjust to the challenges posed by a bandage. While many cats resent changes to their bathroom areas you may need to help out by changing to a lower-edged litter pan. Additionally, we may recommend switching litter types to shredded newspaper or paper pellet litter based on the nature of your cat's specific surgery. Finally, it is important to monitor the bandage for signs that it has become wet or soiled, therefore requiring replacement or, if indicated, removal.

5 Can my cat use regular cat litter? Usually, but as mentioned above, after certain procedures we may recommend switching to pellet or shredded paper-litter to prevent potential post-surgical complications.



6 Can my cat play with other pets? We generally recommend separating pets from recovering cats for a period of 10 days (most non-orthopedic) to 6 weeks (most orthopedic). This prevents re-injury from unrestricted play as well as allowing you to more closely monitor litter box habits and your cat's appetite.

7 Our home has children — are there special concerns for my cat's recuperation? Please use language your child will understand to explain that your cat has had surgery, does not feel well, and cannot play for a while. Children, depending on their age, should be 'briefed' on the details of your cat's injuries and surgical repairs. Generally, it is best for most children to avoid holding or carrying their recovering cats as unpredictable movements may cause pain and attempting to 'hold' a wiggling cat can aggravate nature's healing efforts.

8 How do I keep my cat from jumping? This is an age-old dilemma! We advise keeping cats confined to a large dog crate or small bathroom (shower stall) during the day when you are not at home. In the evening, while home, cats may be supervised and have living room or bedroom 'privileges' in which their propensity to jump can be anticipated, and with a commitment – prevented!

9 When will my cat be able to return to the outdoors? We generally advise keeping your cat indoors for the entire duration of the healing process. This obviously depends on the procedure, and we will advise you specifically on this timeframe. Generally, it has been demonstrated that indoor cats live longer than outdoor cats. We encourage indoor living to be a life-long consideration for your cat.

10 Does my cat have special dietary needs following surgery? This really depends on the original condition being treated with surgery. In most cases, to nutritionally assist the surgical recovery, we recommend highly palatable and easy-to-digest food (canned or moist — unless you have a kibble craver!) until your cat's typical appetite pattern returns to normal (usually within a week or so of returning home). A sustained lack of appetite (>36 hours) should be brought to our attention immediately.

11 How can I encourage my cat to eat once home? Canned food or food in pouches tends to be more aromatic and more palatable than dry kibble so offering these types of diets may entice your cat to eat. However, some cats are "addicted" to their regular kibble and may refuse other types of foods! Please keep these special food 'cravings' in mind when offering tasty food alternatives.

12 Does my cat need to wear a 'cone'? If your cat is an overzealous groomer or simply resents the bandage, feeding tube or his/her incision, you may need to place an Elizabethan collar to protect the integrity of the surgical procedure. Despite their often strenuous objection, most cats accommodate to the presence of the e-collar within 2 days. Please note that your cat is perfectly able to eat, drink and use his/her litter pan when fitted with an e-collar of appropriate size!

13 My cat goes 'crazy' when kept indoors, what can we do? Consider different methods of calming your cat such as catnip, pheromone sprays, indoor cat lawns and removal of stimuli (windows facing the bird feeder, visual access to squirrels, etc.) If these methods are ineffective we can always consider boarding your cat or providing you with prescription anti-anxiety medications and/or tranquilizers.



14 How do I know if my cat is in pain? The evaluation of pain and discomfort can be a very subjective and frustrating issue. Many cats can be good at concealing pain or are naturally stoic. Nonetheless, the following are some pain-associated behaviors which may help you evaluate pain on an individual basis:

- a. **Posture:** cats may tuck an affected limb, arch or hunch their backs, twist their bodies to protect a painful site, hang their heads, remain in sitting positions for prolonged periods of time or lie in a flat, extended position with reticence to move.
- b. **Temperament:** Although any deviations from his/her normal behavior are most significant, many painful cats become aggressive, may bite or scratch, chew the site of pain (such as a surgical incision), suddenly assault areas of pain, attempt to escape a pain stimulus or may hide.
- c. **Vocalization:** Pain can elicit a number of feline vocalizations including crying, hissing, spitting, moaning, and (oddly) anxious purring.
- d. **Locomotion:** Pain can cause reluctance to move, carrying of one leg (non-weight bearing limb), any degree of lameness, unusual gait, inability to walk or general inactivity.
- e. **Other:** Failure to groom, dilated pupils, no interest in food or play, rapid heart rate, and rapid shallow respirations may also be signs of pain or discomfort.
- f. **Paradoxically:** Many of the clinical signs and behaviors typically associated with demonstrations of pain also may be seen commonly as side-effects of some of the medications used to treat pain!



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