PRE-OPERATIVE INFORMATION

Preparing Your Brachycephalic Dog for Surgery

> This page is for owners of brachycephalic breeds — such as Bulldogs, Pugs, and French Bulldogs — scheduled for soft palate and/or stenotic nares surgery. It explains why these breeds carry extra anesthetic risk, and the specific steps we take to keep your dog safe. This is in addition to, not instead of, our general surgery information.

Why This Surgery Helps

Brachycephalic breeds are prone to airway issues because of their anatomy. This surgery improves your dog's breathing and quality of life by addressing an elongated soft palate and narrow nostrils (stenotic nares), both common contributors to the breathing difficulty these breeds often experience.

Why Brachycephalic Dogs Have Higher Anesthetic Risk

Brachycephalic dogs have unique anatomical challenges that make anesthesia riskier compared to other breeds:

- **Airway obstruction:** Small windpipes and excess soft tissue can lead to breathing difficulties during anesthesia.
- **Stress-related breathing problems:** Stress can worsen breathing issues in these breeds.
- **Regurgitation and aspiration:** Brachycephalic breeds are more likely to regurgitate stomach contents, which could enter the airway and cause serious complications such as aspiration pneumonia.

While these risks exist, modern veterinary techniques and careful planning significantly reduce them. We take extra steps before, during, and after surgery to keep your dog safe — outlined below.

How We Reduce Anesthetic Risk

Stress reduction

- **Trazodone:** Helps your dog stay calm and relaxed. Reducing stress lowers breathing rate and avoids unnecessary strain on the airway.
- **Gabapentin:** Also reduces anxiety, and has mild pain-relieving properties to help keep your dog comfortable before and after surgery.

Preventing regurgitation and aspiration

- **Cerenia:** An anti-nausea medication that reduces the risk of regurgitation, helping to keep stomach contents where they belong.
- **Omeprazole:** Reduces stomach acid production, decreasing the chance of irritation or complications if regurgitation does occur.

> ℹ **How you help:** We will give you these medications so you can administer them the night before surgery, and again 2–3 hours prior to drop-off.

What to Expect on the Day of Surgery

1. **Arrival**
   Our team will assess your dog to ensure they're ready for surgery.
2. **Anesthesia monitoring**
   During the procedure, our team closely monitors your dog's breathing, heart rate, and oxygen levels using advanced monitoring equipment.
3. **Postoperative care**
   Your dog will be monitored until fully awake. We'll provide detailed instructions on what to watch for at home, such as swelling, changes in breathing, or signs of discomfort.

After Surgery: What You Need to Know

Your dog may have some mild discomfort, swelling, or a sore throat after surgery, but these symptoms should improve within a few days. You'll receive medications to help manage pain and reduce the risk of infection. Additionally, you may need to:

- Feed small, soft meals for a few days.
- Limit activity to keep your dog calm and prevent stress on their airway.
- Watch for signs of breathing difficulty, vomiting, or excessive coughing.

⚠ Call us immediately if you notice breathing difficulty, vomiting, or excessive coughing after surgery.

Your dog is in excellent hands, and we're committed to making their surgery as safe and stress-free as possible. If you have any questions or concerns about the procedure, the medications, or postoperative care, please don't hesitate to reach out. Together, we can help your dog breathe easier and enjoy a better quality of life.

Questions Before Surgery?

If you have any questions or concerns about the procedure, the medications, or postoperative care, please don't hesitate to reach out before your dog's surgery date.

ROYAL BAY VETERINARY CLINIC

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AFTER-HOURS EMERGENCIES

Central Victoria Veterinary Hospital
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WAVES Emergency
778-432-4322
947 Langford Parkway