PRE-OPERATIVE INFORMATION

Preparing for Surgery

> This page explains what to expect before, during, and after your pet's surgery, including the risks of anesthesia and how we work to minimize them. Please read this before your pet's procedure — we'll also ask you to confirm you've reviewed this information on the day of surgery.

Why We Share This With You

Surgery is a significant event in any pet's life, and even routine procedures carry some risk. We want you to understand what those risks are and what we do to reduce them, so you can make an informed decision and feel confident about your pet's care.

Risks of Anesthesia and Surgery

All surgeries, even "routine" ones, carry some risk. The main risks associated with general anesthesia include:

- Underlying disease that wasn't previously apparent
- Low blood pressure
- Aspiration of regurgitated stomach contents
- Low body temperature
- Infection
- Pain
- Hemorrhage
- Death (rare)

These complications are uncommon, and the rest of this page explains the specific steps we take to reduce each of these risks.

Pre-Anesthetic Assessment

Underlying disease isn't always obvious. Before any anesthetic procedure, we take a detailed history and our veterinarians perform a physical exam to check for fever, heart and lung problems, and any other signs of illness. This allows us to tailor the anesthetic plan to your individual pet and address other issues (such as retained baby teeth or skin disease) at the same time.

Pre-Anesthetic Bloodwork

We offer blood testing before anesthesia to identify problems that may not be evident on a physical exam but could increase the risk during anesthesia. A Complete Blood Count (CBC) checks for anemia, inflammation and infection, and platelet levels (platelets are the cells that start the clotting process). A biochemical profile checks kidney values, liver values, and protein levels at minimum, while more comprehensive panels can also include glucose, electrolytes, pancreatic values, and thyroid level.

We can run these tests in-house with results in minutes, but prefer to arrange them a few days to weeks ahead of surgery when possible. We recommend bloodwork for all pets, and especially for pets over 8 years of age or at higher risk.

TIER	INCLUDES	SEND-OUT (BOOK 2–7 DAYS AHEAD)	IN-HOUSE, DAY OF
Basic Under 4 years	CBC, mini-chemistry profile	~$130	~$180
Plus 5–7 years	CBC, baseline chemistry profile, urinalysis	~$325	~$405
Comprehensive 8+ years	CBC, full chemistry profile, urinalysis, thyroid	~$410	~$545

ℹ If you'd like pre-anesthetic bloodwork arranged ahead of time rather than the day of surgery, please call us to book a technician appointment in advance.

⚠ **Dental procedures:** if you would like pre-anesthetic bloodwork done before a dental, it must be arranged in advance — we are not able to offer same-day bloodwork for dentals except in very limited circumstances. Our dental surgery spots are in high demand, and same-day results showing a concern could mean cancelling the procedure on short notice. Please call us ahead of time to book this as a separate technician appointment.

Fasting Before Surgery

We ask that pets be fasted for a minimum of 4 hours before anesthesia, though longer is ideal — most surgical patients should not be fed anything after midnight the night before their appointment. This reduces the risk of regurgitation during anesthesia. Water is generally fine right up until drop-off unless we've told you otherwise.

ℹ Fasting guidelines are different for rabbits, pocket pets, and some other patients. If your pet isn't a dog or cat, please check our species-specific drop-off instructions or ask us directly.

IV Catheter and Fluids

An intravenous (IV) catheter and fluids during surgery help in several ways. The catheter is placed in a leg vein before anesthesia and provides immediate access to the bloodstream in the rare event that emergency medications are needed. IV fluids help keep your pet hydrated and support blood pressure and the processing of anesthetic medications. We use an IV catheter and surgical fluids for all major surgeries, longer procedures, and in pets that are unwell.

Anesthetic Monitoring and Safety

We tailor anesthetic drugs to each individual patient rather than using a one-size-fits-all protocol. Most surgical patients are intubated with an endotracheal tube to provide oxygen, protect the airway, and allow us to fine-tune the depth of anesthesia.

- Vital signs — blood pressure, ECG, heart rate, respiratory rate, oxygen levels, and body temperature — are monitored constantly from the start of anesthesia through full recovery.
- At least one trained staff member is dedicated to monitoring your pet throughout the entire procedure.
- An anesthetic record is kept for every patient, tracking vitals, drugs, and fluid rates.
- A warmed surgical table and patient warming systems help prevent the drop in body temperature that anesthesia can cause.
- Major surgeries are performed in a dedicated, closed-off operating room with sterile gowns, caps, and masks, and a freshly sterilized instrument pack for each patient.
- Pain management is provided before, during, and after surgery, using oral, injectable, and topical options as appropriate.

After Surgery

You should receive a follow-up phone call in the days after surgery to check on your pet's recovery. If you haven't heard from us and have concerns, please call us during business hours or send an email. If you have concerns after we've closed for the day, Central Victoria Veterinary Hospital and WAVES in Langford both provide 24-hour emergency care.

ROYAL BAY VETERINARY CLINIC

During clinic hours

250-940-4646

hello@royalbayvet.ca

AFTER-HOURS EMERGENCIES

Central Victoria Veterinary Hospital
250-475-2495
760 Roderick St

WAVES Emergency
778-432-4322
947 Langford Parkway

We know this information can feel like a lot to take in, and it's natural to feel nervous before your pet's surgery. These risks are real but rare, and we take your pet's health and safety seriously at every step. If you have any questions at all, please don't hesitate to ask us before the day of surgery.

Concerned About Cost?

We never want cost to stand in the way of your pet getting the care they need. If you'd like to explore pet insurance or payment plan options, see our financing options page.