

Post-operative Information and Instructions for Feral Cats

1. **Keep the cat warm until fully awake**

Keep the carrier or trap in a warm, dry, draft-free and sheltered area where you can check on it frequently. Cats that are not fully recovered from anaesthesia are at risk of hypothermia (dangerously low body temperature) **which could make the cat become re-anaesthetized and perhaps die.** While the cat is still drowsy, keep the carrier or trap in a room that is as warm as possible, ideally near 85°F. A cat's normal body temperature is 100°F, it can become chilled in a 70°F room before the anaesthesia wears off. When the anaesthesia has worn off and the cat is fully awake, it can keep itself warm in a cooler environment. Cover the cage or trap with sheets, towels or blankets to trap warm air and preserve body heat. If the cage or trap is on a cold floor (example: garage) place a thick towel or blanket under **AND** over it to maintain the warmth and heat. Make sure there is ample ventilation in hot weather, so the cat does not overheat.

2. **Water and food**

If the cat is alert and you have safe access, provide water in a way that won't spill and get the bedding wet. The cat does not need water if it is eating canned food. For cats over 4 pounds: provide canned food when the cat is fully awake. For cats/kittens less than 4 pounds: provide a small amount (1 tablespoon) of canned food as soon as the cat is awake enough to eat safely. Provide additional canned food (approximately ½ the amount of a normal meal) 2 or 3 hours later. The morning following surgery, cats should be offered a regular sized meal of canned food twice daily while confined in the trap or cage prior to release.

3. **Normal surgery reactions**

Eartips: Following an eartip, there may be a small amount of bleeding

Males: Expect slight bleeding from the scrotum of a neutered male for the first 24 hours. Larger toms may have more significant bleeding but should not require treatment

Females: Many female cats develop a **sterile suture reaction**. This appears as a bump at the incision DAYS after surgery. The reaction is caused by the body breakdown/resorbing the absorbable suture. This is a necessary and expected result of absorbable suture. Cats with suture reactions feel well, play, eat and otherwise appear normal.

4. **Safely observe the cat for the following problems:**

- Failure to stay awake
- Difficulty breathing
- Slow recovery. The cat should be able to move around 4 hours following surgery
- Excessive bleeding from the incision (below the tail for males, on the belly for females)
- Any abnormalities (swelling, redness, discharge) at the incision site. (see section 3 for exception) If the cat develops these or any other problems that might be related to surgery, please seek veterinary attention first. Then call the Toronto Humane Society to notify us that there has been a problem. It is important for the cat's health and our records/protocol that we learn of any problems as soon as possible.

5. **Safe release**

Unless otherwise instructed or noted on the medical record, cats that are recovering without any of the problems listed in section 4 can be released back to their colony location from the trap or crate 24-48 hours following surgery. If the medical record indicates the cat is lactating, she should be released sooner, but **ONLY** when she is fully awake, moving around easily and showing normal behaviour. Cats can cause injury or damage to themselves, to you or to your property if released while still under the effects of anaesthesia due to impaired coordination.

If you have any questions or concerns please email torontostreetcats@gmail.com