

# Preparing for Anesthesia

Your pet is scheduled for an upcoming procedure that requires general anesthesia. There are a few things that we would like you to be aware of before that event. As an average the anesthetic death complication rate is less than 1 in 10,000 in our pets. In order to keep complication rates that low we need to prepare each individual patient for their anesthesia by evaluating certain parameters.

**Current Blood work:** Your doctor may recommend that current blood work be run prior to anesthesia. This blood work gives us a great overview of organ function and how the body is functioning as a whole. It is extremely important to have this information prior to anesthesia so we can anticipate how the kidneys and liver will respond to our anesthetic drugs as well as if there are any other potential abnormalities within the body that we need to be aware of.

**IV catheter and fluids:** We do not anticipate having any anesthetic complications, but in case they should arise it is extremely important that we are able to have access to the veins to administer life saving medications. In order to have access to vessels during anesthesia we recommend that an IV catheter be placed prior to the event. This catheter will stay in place throughout the procedure and the recovery phase. With a catheter in place we are also able to administer fluids to your pet to help keep them hydrated and from becoming hypotensive during this anesthetic procedure; therefore, fluids are always recommended for procedures anticipated to last longer than 15 minutes.

**Hematocrit/ Total Protein and Glucose:** The morning of the procedure we will be monitoring a few values that can change quickly from your pet's last blood work check and are very important in keeping complications minimized. The first is hematocrit which looks at the percent of circulating red blood cells. Red blood cells carry oxygen to the body tissues and are extremely important to the health of your pet. The second is total protein. The protein levels signal to us if your pet is dehydrated and needs IV fluids or if we need to be aware of underlying diseases that can delay surgical healing and fluid distribution. Lastly, glucose levels can change in our bodies very rapidly and are affected by many disease states. We can respond to those changes to avoid a hypoglycemic crisis or catch elevated levels that may indicate a problem.

**Home Preparation:** Please remember to pull your pet's food before you go to bed the night before scheduled anesthesia. We like a 12 hr fast for all adult patients – having an empty stomach decreases the risk of aspiration during anesthesia. If less than 4 months of age, do not fast, but also try not to feed right before bringing them in – we worry about hypoglycemia in very young patients. Water is never to be withheld, for we want our patients to show up hydrated. Also, in an attempt to make your pet more comfortable, please walk them prior to dropping them off... we all can appreciate the concept, “when you gotta go, you gotta go.”

**Flexibility:** Finally, it is always good to remember that when dealing with anesthesia, being prepared minimizes potential complications. Your doctor may need to change their plans quickly based on how your pet is responding. We all have one common goal and that is to make your pet's procedure as uneventful as possible and this can be done more effectively as a team through being prepared and having as much information available as possible. Thank you for entrusting your pet's care with us!