



HOW SAFE IS ANESTHESIA?

The first thing to keep in mind is that your doctor will never recommend general anesthesia for your pet unless they feel that the potential benefit of the procedure outweighs any risks of the anesthetic. There are many steps we take to ensure that your pet has the safest anesthetic experience possible.

1. Consider the patient.
 - Your doctor will perform a complete physical exam on your pet prior to any anesthetic being administered. At this time your doctor will also consider your pet's medical history, temperament and any previous anesthetic or surgical experiences which may influence the types of anesthetic agents that are used.
 - Pre-anesthetic laboratory work is strongly encouraged for all patients and may be required prior to surgery. Blood and urine samples will be collected and analyzed prior to anesthetic induction to assess liver and kidney function, check for anemia, blood clotting capacity, and white blood cell function.
2. Use the most up-to-date techniques and pharmaceuticals
 - An intravenous catheter is placed in your pet to assure rapid access to blood vessels for administration of fluids and medications while your pet is in the hospital.
 - The anesthetic agents that we use are often the same drugs that a human doctor would administer to you if you were undergoing surgery.
 - Technology in this area has advanced greatly and many of our drugs are safer than ever before.
 - To ensure that we are up to date on recent advancements in surgery and anesthesia, our veterinarians and technicians routinely attend national continuing education conferences.
3. Provide support and comfort.
 - While your pet is under anesthesia we will ensure that he or she has all of their physical needs met: eye protection, a heating source, pain medications, fluids, and constant monitoring by trained staff members.

These are just some of the ways we strive to keep your pet as comfortable and as safe as possible.

4. Keep a watchful eye.

- We routinely use our advanced equipment to assess the physical parameters and needs of all of our anesthetized patients. A pulse oximeter will measure the oxygen content of your animal's blood as well as keep track of pulse and respirations. An ECG machine allows us to visualize the electrical output of your pet's heart. A blood pressure machine senses low blood pressure and can help us decide when to use increased fluid therapy or decrease anesthetic depth.
- The "old-fashioned" way of monitoring (aka – manually monitoring) is still a valid and great way to assess a patient under anesthesia. A certified veterinary technician assists the doctor with all anesthetic monitoring and can personally evaluate heartbeats, respirations, and anesthetic depth so that we can make decisions based on experience and insight as well as technology.

If you are concerned about the risks of anesthesia for your pet or have questions about surgery or our anesthetic protocols please feel free to talk with your veterinarian.