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GENERAL ANESTHESIA

Our priority during any procedure is the **SAFETY, HEALTH** and **WELL BEING** of your pet. If your pet must undergo surgery or dental work, she/he may require an anesthetic. To ensure the procedure is the least traumatic and stressful, the following steps are taken:

PRE-ANESTHETIC

1. A blood sample is taken to obtain more detailed information about your pet's health and organ function. **THIS PROVIDES a) peace of mind, b) detects hidden illness, c) reduces anesthetic risk and d) a baseline for future test results.**
2. A physical exam is performed by the veterinarian.
3. A sedative is given to help reduce anxiety for a smooth anesthetic induction and post-operative discomfort.

ANESTHETIC

4. Gas anesthesia is delivered by an endotracheal (breathing) tube. This tube ensures the uninterrupted supply of oxygen, which is a very important feature of safe anesthesia.
5. Intravenous fluid therapy is given during the procedure to help maintain blood pressure and prevent dehydration post-operatively.
6. The Anesthesia Technologist continuously monitors body temperature, blood pressure, heart rate, breathing, level of anesthesia and amount of intravenous fluids received throughout the surgery and recovery periods.
7. Pets are kept warm during and after the surgery with warm blankets, hot water bottles and circulating warm water heating pad.
8. Our surgeons use a separate pack of surgical instruments, gloves, gowns and drapes for each patient, ensuring sterility.

POST-ANESTHETIC

9. Post-operative discomfort is kept to a minimum with the use of appropriate pain medication.
10. Our Veterinary Technician will review the homecare instructions at the time of discharge and address any concerns that you may have.
11. A complimentary re-examination appointment is scheduled after the surgery for suture removal and to assess wound healing.

If you have any further questions, would like to see any of our equipment or have a tour of the hospital please ask.

Thank you for choosing Point Grey Veterinary Hospital and trusting your pet's care to us!



TOLERATING NAIL TRIMMING

Some dogs resent having their paws held and nails trimmed. This is partly instinctive for young animals and may also be learned from an unpleasant experience during nail trimming.

The live portion of the nail bed contains sensitive nerves and blood vessels. If nails are cut too short, your dog may learn that nail trimming is painful. This negative experience is not easily forgotten. Once a dog has learned to anticipate discomfort when his/her feet are touched, the evasive reaction can intensify each time. For many dogs that enjoy regular outdoor activity, walking on pavement may maintain the nails at an acceptable length.

Training Tips

If your dog is instinctively cautious about having his/her feet touched, and even if your dog shows no signs of withdrawing the paw, please teach him/her that this interaction is pleasant.

Before you attempt to trim your dog's nails, begin by touching his/her legs, feet and toes and associate it with an activity your dog enjoys. When resting, begin by petting all over and slowly progressing down the legs. Reward positive behaviour with a treat. Do not try and do too much at first. Gradually manipulate your dog's foot more each time. Eventually, slip your fingers between each toe and gently squeeze to flex the toe, putting gentle pressure on the foot and manipulating the leg. Do not attempt this exercise when your dog is agitated/excited. Once your pet tolerates these exercises at rest, begin to incorporate these elements during play. Train your dog to assume the "down/stay" position when retrieving a ball, for example and "shake" a paw before resuming play.

Trimming Tips

If you are unsure of how to trim toenails, please ask us. The nail bed is seen as a pinkish triangle at the base of the nail (light coloured nails). Even a skilled professional may misjudge the depth that a nail may be trimmed. It's better to cut less than too much. Trim off small sections at a time and stop well short of the nail bed. Cut your dog's nails frequently a little at a time. Continue to manipulate your dog's feet between trims so that it remains a familiar sensation.

Problem Pedicures

If your dog has already had a negative experience with nail trimming, start with the basics above. Some dogs never habituate and that's where we come in. For those individuals that truly need a nail trim and simply will not tolerate it, we are able to sedate him/her and perform the trim with no problem at all. Of course, sedation is a last resort, but we're here to help if needed.



UNDERSTANDING YOUR PET'S BLOOD TEST RESULTS

The blood tests we run help us discover the causes of your pet's symptoms and allow us to monitor progress and response to medical treatments. Blood tests also enable us to detect illnesses early, before symptoms appear generally making the outcome more favorable. As partners in your pet's health care, we want to make sure you understand why we are recommending certain tests and treatments. Here is an explanation of some of the more common blood tests.

COMPLETE BLOOD COUNT (CBC)

The results inform us about dehydration, anemias, blood clotting disorders and infection.

- **White blood cell count** is the number of cells of the immune system. Increased or decreased numbers can indicate certain types of infection and other disease processes, such as problems with the bone marrow.
- **Neutrophils, lymphocytes and monocytes** are types of white blood cells. Numbers go up or down depending on the type of infection present.
- **Eosinophils** are white blood cells associated with allergies and parasites.
- **Red blood cell count** is the number of red blood cells and is used to detect problems like anemias or dehydration.
- **Hemoglobin** is the substance INSIDE the red blood cell that carries oxygen to tissues.
- **Hematocrit** is the ratio of red blood cells to plasma. Useful in detecting dehydration and anemia.
- **Platelets** are cells that cause blood to clot.
- **Reticulocytes** are young immature red blood cells. Their presence tells us that the bone marrow is responding to anemia.

CHEMISTRY SCREEN

These tests measure for hormone imbalances, electrolyte imbalances and organ dysfunction.

- **Glucose** measures blood sugar level. It will be elevated in diabetic patients and may be too low in cases of infection, malnutrition or after seizures.
- **Blood Urea Nitrogen** reflects kidney function. A high value may indicate kidney disease, dehydration or urinary obstruction. A low value may indicate liver disease.
- **Creatinine** reflects kidney/liver function. Helps distinguish between kidney and non-kidney causes of high blood urea nitrogen test values.
- **Sodium** is an electrolyte and may be lowered because of vomiting or diarrhea. It will be elevated in patients that are suffering from dehydration.
- **Chloride**: an essential electrolyte often depleted through vomiting.
- **Potassium** is an electrolyte that may be lowered due to diarrhea, vomiting or chronic kidney disease. High levels may indicate kidney failure or urinary obstruction.

- **Calcium** is a mineral typically associated with bone, but is much more important in assessing for other diseases. Abnormal values may be the result of cancer, kidney disease or hormone imbalances.
- **Phosphorus** is a mineral usually linked to kidney and nutritional diseases.
- **Total protein** reflects hydration level and gives us more insight about liver and kidney function.
- **Albumin** is a type of body protein. Measurement of albumin helps evaluate dehydration, bleeding, bowel, kidney and liver function.
- **Globulin** is also a body protein and reflects chronic inflammation, especially dental disease and autoimmune diseases (like Lupus).
- **Bilirubin** comes from the bile tract in the liver. Elevations in bilirubin reflect liver/bile tract disease and blood disorders.
- **Alkaline phosphatase (alk phos)** is an indicator of MANY problems and is an important marker for us. Elevations in alk phos may indicate liver /gall bladder damage. It may also indicate problems with the intestinal tract and is a useful tool in screening for a hormonal condition called Cushing's Disease.
- **SGPT** originates in the liver and elevations suggest liver damage.
- **SGOT** elevations suggest liver, heart or skeletal muscle damage.
- **Creatinine phosphokinase** is a muscle enzyme and its elevation reflects muscle injury/trauma generally.
- **Gamma GT** originates in the liver and elevations indicate liver/gall bladder disease.
- **Amylase** is an enzyme from the pancreas and its elevation may indicate pancreas inflammation or problems with the intestinal tract.
- **Lipase** is also a pancreatic enzyme and elevations may indicate pancreas inflammation.
- **Cholesterol** is altered by hormonal and metabolic diseases, such as problems with the thyroid.
- **T4** is a thyroid hormone. High levels of T4 indicate hyperthyroidism. Low levels occur with hypothyroidism and secondary to significant diseases.

Please do not hesitate to ask for further explanation if you have any questions.