**Frequently Asked Questions**

**What information is it important for the anesthesia team to have prior to caring for my pet?**

The history taken by the student or clinician when you first arrive at the AHC is very important. Please be certain to share a list of any and all medications (even monthly heartworm prevention, deworming regimen or flea treatment) your pet may be taking or that your referring veterinarian may have given. The information you provide will be used in conjunction with your pet’s physical exam and diagnostic tests in order to determine his course of treatment as well as the anesthetic protocol.

**What should I expect when my pet needs anesthesia?**

When it is decided that your pet needs anesthesia, expect for your pet to spend the night in our hospital the night before his procedure and, sometimes, the night of the procedure, as well. The anesthesia service will receive a request from the clinician, and an anesthesia student will be assigned to the case. That student will review your pet’s medical history, perform a physical exam, study the procedure being performed, and decide on an anesthetic plan especially for your pet. This suggested anesthetic plan will then be discussed with the anesthesiologist for approval. Your pet will be anesthetized according to the approved plan, and the procedure will be performed. Once your pet recovers from anesthesia, he will be returned to the care of the original student and clinician.

**If my pet is home with me the night before his procedure, what should I do?**

If your pet is having a routine procedure, such as spay/neuter or dental, and the clinician has allowed you to take your pet home the night before the procedure, it is important that you adhere to any instructions the clinician may have given you. These instructions may include not feeding your pet anything after midnight. It is also important to have your pet here on time the morning of the procedure, as arriving late may prevent your pet from having the procedure done that day.

**How is my pet anesthetized?**

Your pet’s anesthesia record will be kept by the anesthesia student assigned to his case. This student, under the guidance of at least one of the anesthesia team members, will perform your pet’s anesthesia.

Most pets require premedication with a sedative before anesthesia. This is to calm your pet as we prepare to induce anesthesia and allows for easier placement of an IV catheter, which almost all anesthetic patients receive. Anesthesia is induced either by IV injection or by allowing your pet to breathe anesthetic agents. Most patients are then intubated so that we can help with their breathing if needed. The type of premedication, induction agent and maintenance agent are all part of the approved plan and are specific to your pet’s individual needs.

**What will be monitored on my pet during the procedure?**

While your pet is anesthetized, we monitor several things, including ECG (heart’s electrical activity), blood pressure, oxygenation of blood (SpO2) and carbon dioxide (ETCO2). We also check pulses manually and watch your pet closely to determine their depth of anesthesia. For all large animals, and some of our small animal cases, we will monitor blood pressure with an arterial catheter. Adjustments are made to anesthesia as needed during the procedure to provide the best care possible for the patient.

**Will my pet be in pain?**

Pain can be very real, and it is our goal to minimize, if not totally eliminate, it. A portion of your pet’s anesthetic plan is pain management. Taking into consideration all aspects of your pet’s history, physical exam and the type of procedure being performed, we do our best to minimize the pain before, during and afterward.

**What should I expect after my pet has recovered from anesthesia?**

Your pet may be groggy and sleepy for hours after he has recovered from anesthesia, or he may bounce right back to like he was before we anesthetized him. Each pet is different and will recover differently; therefore, you may or may not be allowed to visit with him immediately after he awakens from anesthesia. Please understand that such precautions are for the health and safety of your pet. We know you will be anxious to see him, and we will do our best to make that happen in a timely fashion!