



## Post Spay/Neuter Care: Concerns email [clinic@bbawc.org](mailto:clinic@bbawc.org)

**Do not allow your cat to lick or chew at the incision.** Licking may cause the incision to become infected or open, which will likely require follow-up visits at a veterinary clinic at considerable cost. Make or buy a cone from our clinic or a pet store! Cardboard can work very well for a DIY cone (cardboard bowls and plates are our favorite for kittens), and most pet stores have an array of inexpensive cone of shame options.

Your cat may still be a little stoned or hissy from anesthesia -- if so, put them in a small and quiet room so they can relax and sleep it off. Some cats will be awake and immediately ready to go -- if so -- keep them calm! Cats will also smell different to cats who stayed at home, so it's not unusual for some growling to occur as the left behind gang makes sure that the cat who came back is the one who left. Your patient should be accepted back into the fold within 48 hours.

**Eating Post-Surgery:** After surgery, cats can become nauseous so please wait 30-45 minutes after they get home and settle and then offer them  $\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{1}{3}$  of their normal meal. If they eat it and keep everything down, you can offer additional small meals over the rest of the evening. You should be able to feed normally the next morning. It's okay if they don't eat much the first night. They may not poop for the first day which is also totally normal. If they are not eating within 24 hours please let us know. If they have not pooped or peed within 48 hours please let us know.

**Activity Level:** Restrict as much play / leaping / wrestling and other shenanigans as much as possible for the next seven days **ESPECIALLY FOR FEMALE CATS**. This might mean that you have to keep them separated from other animals or in the bathroom. That's okay. It's dangerous for female cats to leap and play too much in the first few days after surgery - they may open their incision which can lead to infection or the need for emergency surgery. Or too much activity or movement can result in inflammation around the surgery area and something called a seroma. **Seromas** are a common occurrence at the surgery site and do not require treatment. A seroma is an accumulation of fluid at the incision area (it looks like a bulge or bubble at the surgery site. These occur because of movement at the incision from an active cat and a normal reaction to the dissolvable sutures used to close the incision. You can warm compress the area and they usually disappear in a few weeks.

**No Baths:** Do not bathe your cat for 14 days or apply topical ointment to the incision site, the surgical glue on the incision will dissolve too quickly if it becomes wet. If you notice fuzz or litter attached to a suture site, you can gently wipe the area with a damp washcloth or towel.

**Female cats (and male cryptorchids)** have a mid-line incision in their abdomen. **Don't let your cat lick their incision** -- if they repeatedly try to, you can either make a cone out of a paper plate or purchase an Elizabethan collar from any pet store, or pick up one from us. They have internal sutures that provide strength to the tissue as they heal; these will

dissolve after approximately four months. Surgical glue has also been applied to the skin to seal the incision against bacterial penetration. There should be no drainage, discharge or odor in females, and redness and swelling should be minimal. It is not unusual for the incision to become slightly redder during the first few days, as healing begins to take place. Mild to moderate swelling may occur when the body has a minor reaction to the suture material. This can cause fluid to build up, called a seroma -- it will go away over time. Occasionally, a suture will push through the skin. This isn't anything to worry about, please let us know and we will make arrangements to have the suture clipped.

**Male cats** have two incisions, one on each side of the scrotum. As it is better for it to heal without any sutures, the incisions are left open. Check these incision sites once a day by lifting up his tail. Don't let him lick these incisions. **If he sits down while using the litterbox, put some shredded newspaper on the top of the litter so nothing gets stuck.** Male cats may appear as if they still have testicles; this is normal, and the swelling should subside gradually through the recovery period. If there are any bumps or bruises present, they should decrease in size and appearance through the recovery period.

**E-Collars:** Ideally your cat should have an e-collar on to make sure that they don't lick or chew on the incision site. Not all cats will require a collar, but those that do can quickly open up the incision if they are not carefully watched and monitored. If you are home and supervising you can take the collar off, but please make sure that the collar is on if you are not supervising. You can purchase an e-collar from us or you [can make](#) or purchase your own. Males should wear the e-collar from 5-7 days post op, and females should wear them from 7-10 days post op.

**Tattoos:** All cats receive a green tattoo on their abdomen once they have been spayed or neutered. This ensures that any person will know that the cat has had surgery and does not need additional surgery. The tattoo has a little surgical glue on top of it so can be a little flaky as that dries off. There is no incision on the site that you need to worry about just a little surface skin cut.

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## Feral Cats:

Do your best to keep the trap as clean as possible while the cat is recovering post surgery.

**Holding Post- Surgery:** Healthy cats: 48 hours for males, 72 hours for females. A lactating cat may be returned after 24 hours, assuming there is no sign of infection at her suture site and her recovery is progressing normally. For cats who underwent a late-term spay/abort, we recommend that the cat be held for 4 – 5 days, with monitoring for signs of complications. It is best if such cats are transferred to a wire crate. For most feral cats, the 2 – 3 day holding period is manageable and affords the cats time to begin to heal from their surgery and the caretakers time to assess the cats' condition before releasing them. Occasionally, a cat will exhibit behavior that indicates a high stress level (example: repeated attempts to escape the trap such that the cat causes skin abrasions). In such cases, cats should be released when recovered from anesthesia and it is determined that the cat does not have any medical problems directly related to surgery. In these instances, releasing the cat sooner may be more beneficial than continued confinement.

**Post Surgery Monitoring:** Because of a lack of history for these cats, any surgery is inherently more risky. It is important to monitor appetite (cat should be eating by 24 hours after surgery), bleeding (signs of bleeding on holding papers can be a sign of concern), lethargy or change in behavior.

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**Concerned? Email [clinic@bbawc.org](mailto:clinic@bbawc.org) including the name of the cat, when the surgery date was, and describe your concerns. Please include a picture if you're concerned about an incision site!**

**We do our best to monitor the email and phone lines. But if you are concerned about the immediate safety of the cat, please do not wait for a response but contact a 24 hour veterinary hospital immediately.**

**The main 24-hour clinics in New York City which offer rescuers discounts are:**

**Animal Medical Center**  
(212) 838-8100  
510 East 62nd Street  
New York, NY 10065

**Veterinary Emergency Referral Group (VERG)**  
(718) 522-9400  
196 4th Avenue  
Brooklyn, NY

**Blue Pearl** (multiple clinics all over the city)  
Brooklyn (718) 596-0099  
Midtown (212) 767-0099  
Queens (718) 263-0099