

Pain Control



At our pet clinic we assume that all surgical procedures result in some pain. Like infants, our companion animals may not express pain in ways that we can easily recognize. Our job is to anticipate and alleviate pain based on our understanding of how animals experience and express pain.

All patients undergoing procedures requiring general anesthesia are given a pre-anesthetic injection of a narcotic type pain medication as well as an oral pain medication. This has a calming effect on the patient and ensures that pain medication is in the system prior to the surgery which makes pain control more effective. Following surgery but before recovery from anesthesia, patients receive post-surgical laser therapy and may also receive an additional injection of pain medication.

The type of pain medication that a patient goes home with will depend on the patient and the procedure. The following information describes the common pain medications we use and side effects which may also occur.

Rimadyl (carprofen) - for dogs

This anti-inflammatory pain medication is in the same family as ibuprofen. It is designed to be gentler on the stomach of dogs. Side effects include intestinal upset, so this medication is best given with food. Rarely, animals will experience liver injury. Pre-anesthetic blood work allows us to monitor the impact of Rimadyl on a patient. This medication is given every 12 hours and must not be combined with aspirin or similar products. Rimadyl should be stopped if the patient is not eating, vomits, has diarrhea, has a black tarry stool, or is quieter than usual.

Onsior (robinacoxib) - for cats

This anti-inflammatory pain medication is in the coxib family. Side effects include intestinal upset so this medication is best given with food. Rarely, animals will experience liver injury. Pre-anesthetic blood work allows us to monitor the impact of Onsior on a patient. This medication is given every 24 hours and must not be combined with aspirin or similar products. Onsior should be stopped if the patient is not eating, vomits, has diarrhea, has a black tarry stool, or is quieter than usual.

Gabapentin

This medication is sometimes given in combination with an anti-inflammatory. It may cause sedation.

Duragesic (fentanyl) patch

Fentanyl is a potent narcotic medication that is released slowly from the patch and absorbed through the skin. This is the same process that is used in nicotine or estrogen patches. This is an ideal form of pain medication because once the patch reaches its full effect, pain control is continuous. The patch must be applied 24 hours prior to surgery. If you choose this type of pain medication you will need to make an appointment for your pet one day prior to your pet's surgery date for application. This is the type of pain medication we encourage for cats being declawed. Side effects of fentanyl include sedation, stimulation, intestinal upset, and skin irritation. Infrequently hair regrowth is abnormal at the site of the patch. The patch must not be eaten by the pet or by children as this may result in a fatal narcotic overdose. Patches are removed at home 4 days after surgery and can be discarded.

Laser Therapy

After surgery patients may be treated with cold laser therapy as it reduces pain and inflammation while also initiating the healing process. This is included in the surgery cost for spay and neuters.

Cerenia (maropitant citrate)

This is an anti-nausea injection occasionally needed if stomach upset occurs. *Given at additional cost*

Buprenorphine

An additional narcotic injection is given when further pain is detected. *Given at additional cost*