

# What to Expect – Soft Tissue Surgery

Foster Hospital for Small Animals is a teaching institution, and students are involved with all phases of the visit, including obtaining the history and performing a physical examination before the patient is seen by the veterinarian. All surgery is performed either by the faculty surgeon or a surgery resident. Regardless of whether you see the faculty surgeon or the resident, Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine at Tufts University faculty supervises all decisions and activities for every pet we treat.

Coming for an appointment does not obligate you to having surgery done at Tufts—we are happy to simply discuss surgical options for your pet.

## Preparing for Your Appointment

When possible, please bring copies of any recent lab work, images, and other tests that the referring veterinarian has performed. We may recommend repeating lab or imaging tests if the available test results are not recent enough or do not provide enough information.

Radiographs, when necessary, can usually be performed during or immediately after the appointment. If you anticipate that radiographs will be taken, do not feed your pet on the morning of the appointment, because sedation is necessary before radiographs can be taken. Water on the morning of the appointment is fine.

Ultrasound examinations can occasionally be performed on the day of the appointment, but will usually be performed the following day. Other imaging procedures that require general anesthesia—i.e., computed tomography (CT) scans and magnetic resonance imaging (MRI)—will be performed the following day, or on a future date.

## Scheduling

Except in emergencies, surgery will NOT be performed on the day of the appointment. It will be performed the following day if scheduling allows, or planned for a future date.

Regardless of when a surgery is scheduled to be performed, it may be delayed if emergency surgeries must be added to the schedule. If a delay occurs, you will be informed as soon as possible, and you will not be responsible for the costs of hospitalization and daily patient care for any extra days.

With rare exceptions, patients must be admitted the day or evening before surgery, not on the morning of surgery. This

allows the patient to become acclimated to the hospital, so that he/she is less stressed at the time of surgery, and allows the anesthesia team to examine the patient and formulate an anesthesia plan that is tailored to the patient's needs.

Patients having minor procedures may be discharged on the day of surgery. However, in most cases, patients will be discharged between one and three days after surgery.

## Cost

When a decision to operate is made, the veterinarian will provide you with an estimate of the total cost of the surgery and hospitalization. You must leave a deposit of 75 percent of the estimate before the surgery can be performed. In general, estimates will assume a routine postoperative course and will not include costs that might be associated with complications, unanticipated findings, and so on. Costs not included in the estimate will be your responsibility.

## Elective Surgeries

Elective surgeries (spays and castrations) are performed by senior veterinary students with supervision by the resident or faculty surgeon. All other surgeries are performed by the resident or faculty surgeon.

## Communication

In the case of elective surgeries, the student will call you immediately after the surgery. In the case of non-elective surgeries, the resident or faculty surgeon will call you immediately after the surgery.

We will update you on the status of hospitalized patients by telephone once or twice each day. Routine updates, when the patient is progressing as expected, may be performed by the student caring for the patient. Other updates, and updates on the day of discharge from the hospital, will be performed by the veterinarian.

## Discharge

When your pet is ready to be released, we will provide you with a set of detailed patient care instructions. Please make a discharge appointment during daytime business hours so that the instructions can be fully explained by the student in charge of the patient. If you cannot make an appointment during business hours, a technician will be assigned the discharge (some gaps in information may occur under these circumstances).

The veterinarian will write a professional report for the referring veterinarian at the time of discharge.

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# Cummings

## Veterinary Medical Center

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