



Post-Operative Instructions for Community Cats

Please call the clinic if there are any complications 702-655-4500

Recovery Time

Cats should not be released while still under anesthesia as they cannot control their body functions and would not be able to escape a predator attack or a car strike.

- Males should be held for 24 hours.
- Females should be held for 48 hours.
- Lactating females:
 - feeding kittens 6 weeks or less- return next day to allow them to care for their kittens.
 - feeding kittens 6 weeks or more- hold for the full 48 hours. This allows time for the drugs to leave the body.

Recovery Environment

- Safety first! Do not try to open the trap or let them out. Do not try to pet or handle the cat. A cat bite can be extremely serious.
- Keep the trap covered to ease stress. Stress can prolong the recovery time.
- Keep them indoors in a temperature regulated bathroom, basement, or spare bedroom. Cats can't regulate their body temperature while recovering from anesthesia.
- Keep the cats away from loud noises, like music, children, other pets, and people.
- Keep the newspaper clean and replace the newspaper if it becomes soiled.
*See *Feeding* for instructions.
- If a cat requires more than 48 hours of care, transfer them to a large crate or holding pen to allow them more space to acclimate.

Look out for

- Bleeding, inflammation, infection, vomiting, difficulty breathing, not waking up, and lack of appetite.
- In case of vomiting while still unconscious (asleep), turn her head to avoid choking. You can do this by gently tipping the trap to no more than a 30-degree angle. Be careful not to jostle them too much.

Feeding

- Kittens (under 6 months of age) can be fed small amounts of food and water after 7pm the same day of surgery.
- Kittens (over 6 months of age)/Adults can be fed early in the morning the following day.
- *While in an enclosed area like a bathroom- lift the back door of the trap slowly and only allow a small gap. Slide a plastic lid with a little bit of food on it through the gap—don't put your hand inside. You can also use an isolator or trap divider like the one below.



Return

- Make sure the cat is fully conscious, clear-eyed, and alert before release.
- Return the cats to the same location where you trapped them (early morning or late night is best as it is quieter)
- Point the traps away from roads or high-traffic areas.
- Open the front door of the trap and then completely remove the cover.
- If the trap has a back door, move the cover away and pull the door up and off (if possible with your trap), then completely remove the cover and walk away.
- Keep your distance and keep your fingers and hands as far from the cat as possible when opening the trap.

Feeding your colony

- Once you have returned the cats, provide food and water.
- If you are the caregiver, you can resume the regular feeding schedule.
- The cats may stay away from the area for a few days after being returned, but rest assured they will return.