



# Noah's Ark Animal Hospital

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## *Safety and Comfort in Surgery*

Many pet owners worry unnecessarily about anesthesia in their pets. Although anesthesia can never be completely free of risk, today's modern anesthetics make that risk very small. Please read the following information before your pet's surgery admission so you are familiar with the safety choices you will be given opportunity to choose from at that time.

The same anesthetics that allow complicated surgeries such as heart and kidney transplants to be performed in humans are used in pets as well. Even very frail animals can usually be anesthetized safely. In general, the risks from NOT performing a needed procedure, such as dental cleaning or tumor removal, are much higher than the risk from the anesthesia.

We can use preoperative blood tests to help us determine whether a procedure will be safe for your pet before it is performed. Even young and apparently healthy animals can have serious organ dysfunctions that are not evident without such testing. Furthermore, even in young or apparently healthy animals whose preoperative blood work is completely normal, the results are invaluable in establishing a baseline to compare to when faced with illness in the future.



At Noah's Ark Animal Hospital, we are proud of our anesthesia safety record. During anesthesia at our hospital, your pet will be monitored closely for blood oxygen levels, heart rate, heart beat intensity, and in most cases blood pressure, throughout surgery. Intravenous fluids are also given if an intravenous catheter is placed or if kidney or liver function is compromised to ensure your pet's full recovery.

### Safety Bloodwork

Please review the pamphlet "Anesthesia and your pet" which explains the testing that can be performed and what information can be gained from each test. Because the liver and kidneys are the main organs responsible for breaking down anesthetics and thus recovery from anesthesia, knowing the function of these organs can reduce risk and provide confidence with anesthesia, knowing that risk has been minimized.

Testing for basic organ function can help provide peace of mind and if as we hope – all tests come back normal – this serves as valuable baseline information for your pet for future reference.

The "prep" tests are designed for a lower cost to provide one or two tests of each liver and kidney function and serve as a useful, yet very minimal/basic screen. For around \$60 you can have basic information about your pet's health and fitness for anesthesia.

Full panels cost more but provide a more extensive look at your pet's health status. A full panel looks at additional tests of liver and kidney function as well as other tests of metabolism which affect the pancreas, muscle and heart function. A full Complete Blood Count (CBC) also gives information about potential

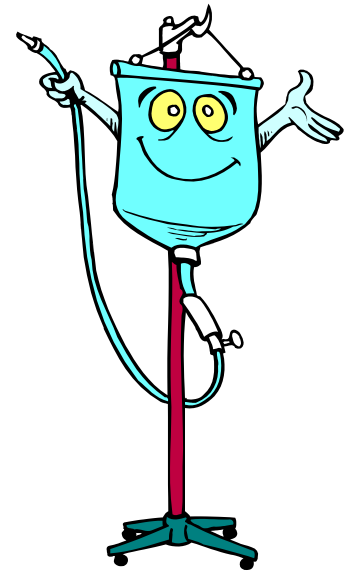
infection, leukemia and anemia. These more complete panels provide an even greater wealth of information as baseline levels for future reference.

A “prep” or “full” level evaluation can be performed in our in house laboratory as late as the morning of anesthesia. If you decide upon the safety bloodwork at least 2 days or more before the procedure, we can save some cost and get some additional tests to evaluate blood clotting ability by sending blood out to our off-site laboratory. Please let us know if you are interested in this great opportunity.

These tests are strongly recommended but optional in animals under 7 years of age. Laboratory studies have shown in older pets that as many as 20% (1 in 5) have abnormalities detectable on blood work but not on physical examination. This is why we recommend annual blood testing for patients 7 years old or older, and require it before anesthesia on these pets.

### Intravenous catheter and fluids

At veterinary teaching hospitals where veterinarians learn to administer anesthesia, an animal is never placed under anesthesia without first having an intravenous catheter placed. An intravenous catheter allows rapid administration of life saving fluids or drugs in case of an emergency. Intravenous fluids help maintain blood pressure, replace blood loss, speeds recovery, and if an animal has an unexpected anesthetic reaction it can mean the difference between life and death. This is also why people never undergo surgery without an intravenous catheter. Unfortunately this is usually never offered to veterinary patients. Even though we know that some clients may choose to forego a catheter, we want you to be informed that the best recommendation is that one is placed before any anesthetic procedure. Animals with intravenous catheters will receive fluids with dextrose to help in a faster recovery for an animal that has been fasted since the evening before and to provide fluid to help in any blood loss resulting from surgery. Please be prepared to make your wishes known about catheter placement at the time your pet is admitted.



### Laser surgery

Our hospital is fortunate to be among a small but growing number of veterinary hospitals which have a surgical laser. Using the laser to make incisions and remove lumps/tumors has several advantages. Lasers are a form of light which “cuts” tissue and seals nerves and blood vessels as it passes through the tissues. This results in reduced postoperative bleeding, less swelling and decreased pain. The technology is very expensive to purchase and maintain, however, the benefits to patient care are tremendous. You have the option of having the laser used for tissue cutting instead of “cold steel” scalpel blades for a small additional cost.

### Microchipping

We now offer permanent pet identification via “microchipping”. Microchips help to identify and reunite lost pets with their owners in cases where they may have been lost forever. If your pet is not already microchipped, a perfect opportunity to have this done is while they are under anesthesia. We will ask you about this option the morning of admission.

Please consider these recommendations before the day your pet is to receive anesthesia so you can make an informed decision about the best medical care for your pet. Feel free to call us if you have questions beforehand. If not, we will review the recommendations with you at the time of admission.