



## **Irrawang and Thornton Veterinary Hospitals**

*So your pet is having an anaesthetic.....*

### **What is involved in Anaesthesia?**

Anaesthetic protocols utilise a range of different anaesthetic drugs in combination to ensure that patients remain comfortable, relaxed and free of pain during surgery and other procedures.

Anaesthetic drugs can be injected into a vein, muscle or inhaled by a face mask or tube in the windpipe (trachea). We may choose to give a “light” sedation, a “heavy” sedation or a general anaesthetic. Your veterinarian will select the most appropriate anaesthetic plan for your pet based on their temperament, health and on the type of procedure to be performed.

### **General Anaesthesia**

For most procedures in a veterinary practice we administer a general anaesthetic. A general anaesthetic works within the brain and results in a total loss of consciousness. A combination of sedatives, pain medications and inhalant gas is used to achieve this. A tube is placed into the windpipe to allow delivery of oxygen and anaesthetic gas, and your pet is monitored closely until fully recovered.



### **Prior History**

A nurse will need to spend a few minutes with you on admission obtaining a brief history of any of your pet's past or present medical problems. This will assist us in choosing the right anaesthetic protocol for your pet. We also ask about how long your pet has been fasting, and their preventative health regimens.

### **Anaesthetist/Veterinary Nurse**

Each patient is assigned their highly trained veterinary nurse for the day. The nurse will ensure all your pet's needs are taken care of for the day; before, during and after their procedure. Our nurses are educated and trained in anaesthetic techniques, monitoring and equipment operation, and will make sure your pet is kept comfortable, warm and given plenty of TLC.

### **Pre-Anaesthetic Evaluation**

A thorough pre- surgical physical examination is performed to detect any possible abnormalities that may affect the procedure. We check heart rate, respiration, chest sounds, temperature and mucous membrane colour to ensure your pet is well enough to undergo anaesthesia and to give us baseline values for monitoring them during the procedure.

## **Pre-Anaesthetic Blood Screen**

To ensure that your pet can properly process and eliminate an anaesthetic, we can run tests to confirm that your pet's organs are functioning properly and to find any hidden health conditions that could put your pet at risk. We screen liver and kidney function, red cell levels and blood glucose levels.

Even young healthy animals may sometimes have abnormalities on blood work, which is why we strongly recommend them for every patient. If the results are normal, we can proceed with confidence. If not, we will discuss our concerns with you and together make a plan to alter the anaesthetic regimen, postpone the procedure, or take other precautions to safeguard your pet's health.

## **PCV (Packed Cell Volume) and TP (Total Protein)**

This is a simple blood test that we perform at no extra charge before every anaesthetic procedure. This does not replace a pre-anaesthetic blood screen but gives us a little bit more information before proceeding with anaesthetic in the case that a blood screen is not performed.

A PCV gives us a percentage of red blood cells in the blood, a TP tells us the level of protein. Abnormal levels may indicate anaemia, dehydration, or a problem with the liver, kidney, bone marrow or gut.

## **Intravenous Catheter**

A catheter is placed into your pet's vein in the front leg to allow us rapid access to administer medications, anaesthetics, fluid support and life-saving drugs in the event of an emergency. To do this we need to clip a small amount of hair which will soon regrow.

## **Surgical Fluid Support**

Anaesthetic drugs can lower blood pressure, affect the heart and breathing. Fluid therapy during anaesthetics is vital to maintain blood pressure, blood-flow to the kidneys and will replace any fluids lost during surgery. Fluid therapy speeds the recovery process by helping to dilute and flush the anaesthetic agents from the blood stream, meaning patients may wake up smoother and faster.



## **Pain relief**

Pain medication is an important part of the anaesthetic plan. Ensuring your pet has appropriate pain relief not only helps your pet feel more comfortable but has also shown to drastically improve recovery times and speed up the healing process. Your veterinarian will tailor a pain management plan to meet your pet's individual needs.

## **Monitoring and Surgery Equipment**

We use a variety of machines that assist us in monitoring our patients. These include devices that monitor blood pressure, blood oxygenation levels, respiration, heart rate and electrical activity (electrocardiogram).



Surgery techniques are improved with the help of modern equipment such as endoscopy, ultrasound, x-ray, orthopaedic devices and ultrasonic dental scaling technology.

If you have further questions or concerns about your pet's anaesthetic, please feel free to contact us.