VetterCare
Expert Pet Care. At Home.



A FREE KIT FOR THE DAYS AFTER YOUR CAT'S SURGERY

Home from surgery. Now what?

Recovery happens at home, and your vet's discharge instructions are the plan. This kit puts that plan on paper, helps you notice changes early (cats often recover quietly), and makes it easy to hand off your cat's care with confidence, whoever is giving it.

General information to use with your veterinarian. Not medical advice.

1. Discharge instructions
2. Recovery room and cone rules
3. Recovery day log
4. Signs to call your vet
5. Care handoff sheet
6. Questions for your vet

STEP 1 · FILL THIS IN BEFORE YOU LEAVE THE CLINIC

Your vet's discharge instructions

Ask your vet or the surgeon to go through each blank with you. Their instructions come first; every surgery is different. ACVS

Cat's name _____ **Surgery date** _____

Procedure _____

Surgeon / vet _____ **Phone** _____

Medication (name on the label)	Amount, as prescribed	Times	With food?	Last day

Give pain medication exactly as directed, even if your cat seems comfortable. Never give human pain medication. (ACVS; ASPCA clinic; Cornell)

FOOD AND WATER

First meal at home: when _____ **How much** _____

Food during recovery ☐ usual food ☐ other: _____

LITTER BOX

Box ☐ usual ☐ low-sided **Litter** ☐ usual ☐ other: _____

Back to usual litter on _____

INCISION, STITCHES AND BATHING

Stitches ☐ dissolve / none ☐ need removing, date: _____

No bath until _____ **Bandage?** ☐ no ☐ yes, change on: _____

Ointment or cleaning ☐ none ☐ only as my vet says: _____

Recheck _____ **Recheck** _____

Anything else my vet wants me to know:

_____

STEP 2 · THE HOUSE RULES WHILE YOUR CAT HEALS

Recovery room and cone rules

Here is what the published veterinary sources describe. Your vet sets the dates; write them in the blanks.

The room

- [ ] A small, quiet room, away from high places, to limit jumping and climbing. ACVS
- [ ] Fresh food, water and a clean litter box in the room. ASPCA clinic
- [ ] Hiding spots blocked, so you can see your cat. Other pets kept out. ASPCA clinic; Ohio State

The cone

- [ ] Calm activity instead: food puzzles and quiet time together. ACVS
- [ ] On as long as your vet says. It stops licking and chewing at the incision. ACVS
- [ ] Licking or chewing can cause infection or make the incision come apart. Texas A&M; ASPCA clinic
- [ ] On for meals, unless you can watch your cat. Back on right after eating. ASPCA clinic
- [ ] A recovery suit or sleeve only if your vet advises it. ACVS

The litter box

- [ ] A low-sided box, and non-clumping litter for a while, if your vet suggests them. ACVS
- [ ] After a male cat's neuter, the ASPCA clinic uses shredded paper or a paper-based litter for at least a week, because litter dust can get into the incision. ASPCA clinic

MY VET'S INSTRUCTIONS

Cone stays on until _____ **Off for meals?** ☐ yes, if watched ☐ no

Recovery room until _____ **Jumping allowed from** _____

Litter box and litter _____

How to pick up my cat _____

Why rest matters: even cats who seem to feel well are still healing. Too much movement or jumping can stress the incision and slow healing. ACVS

STEP 3 · ONE LINE PER DAY

Recovery day log

Bring this to every recheck. It's a record for you and your vet, not a guide to changing treatment.

Date	Incision check OK / changed (see page 4)	Ate all / some / none	Drank usual / less	Litter: urine times	Litter: stool times	Hiding / energy hiding / sleepy / usual	Meds given as prescribed name + time	Initials	Notes

Check the incision every day; a photo every day or so helps your vet see changes. A healing incision is clean and dry, with the edges closed. Eating less, some hiding, and a delayed bowel movement for a day or two are common at first. Using the litter box less can be a sign of pain. (ACVS; AAHA; Texas A&M) Print as many copies as recovery needs.

STEP 4 · KEEP THIS ON THE FRIDGE

Signs to call your vet

CALL YOUR VET RIGHT AWAY IF YOUR CAT

- Has more redness, swelling or heat at the incision
- Has discharge, pus or a bad smell
- Has cloudy, yellow or green drainage
- Bleeds, or the incision opens
- Licks or chews it and you can't stop it
- Vomits or has diarrhea
- Refuses food or water for more than 12 hours
- Strains to urinate, or can't
- Won't use the litter box
- Hasn't defecated after 48 hours
- Has blood in the urine or stool
- Has pale gums or labored breathing
- Is still very sleepy or wobbly after 24 hours
- Cries for more than an hour
- Has pain that gets worse

If you're unsure whether a change is normal, call. That is always appropriate.

American College of Veterinary Surgeons; AAHA; Texas A&M; ASPCA spay/neuter clinics

COMMON IN THE FIRST 24 HOURS

- Sleeping more
- Eating less, or not eating the first night
- Restless or more vocal
- Wobbly for a few hours
- Urinating less or more on day one
- No bowel movement for 1–2 days
- Hiding, wanting less contact

Cats hide pain; a quiet cat can still hurt. Tell your vet about hiding that doesn't ease, squinting, a hunched position, less grooming or licking one spot, hesitating to jump, or using the litter box less. (ACVS; AAHA; Merck Veterinary Manual; Cat Friendly Homes; Texas A&M)

If your cat is experiencing an emergency, please contact your veterinarian or the nearest emergency animal hospital right away.

Surgeon or vet _____ Phone _____

Emergency hospital _____ Phone _____

STEP 5 · FOR ANYONE CARING FOR YOUR CAT

Care handoff sheet

Cat's name _____ Weight _____ Age _____

Surgery _____ Date _____

Our vet _____ Phone _____

Emergency hospital _____ Phone _____

My phone while I'm away _____

ROOM, CONE AND LITTER BOX

Recovery room _____ Keep out _____

Cone on until _____ Off for meals? ☐ yes, if watched ☐ no

Litter box and litter _____ Scoop / change _____

Usual hiding spots and habits _____

Medication (name on the label)	Amount, as prescribed	Times	Given with food?

INCISION AND FOOD

Incision: what it looks like today _____

Food + amount _____ Times _____

ASK YOUR VET, AND WRITE THEIR ANSWER HERE

If my cat won't eat, or hasn't used the litter box, when should my caregiver call?

_____

If a medication is missed or late, what should happen?

_____

If the incision changes (see page 4), who should be called first?

_____

STEP 6 · BRING THIS TO YOUR NEXT VISIT

Questions for your vet

1. How long does the cone stay on, and can it come off for meals? Is a recovery suit an option?
2. What is my cat allowed to do, and for how long? When can my cat jump again?
3. How should I pick up and carry my cat while the incision heals?
4. What kind of litter and litter box should I use, and for how long?
5. When and how much should my cat eat after we get home?
6. Are the stitches dissolving, or do they need to come out? When?
7. Which pain signs should I watch for, and what do I do if I see them?
8. When should I worry if my cat hasn't urinated or defecated?
9. When are our rechecks?

Sources. American College of Veterinary Surgeons, "Postoperative Care After Surgery: What Animal Owners Should Expect" · American Animal Hospital Association (AAHA), "What Can I Expect When My Pet Needs Anesthesia?" and "Signs of Pain in Cats" · Texas A&M College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences (Pet Talk articles and the Veterinary Medical Teaching Hospital's home-care instructions) · ASPCA spay/neuter clinics' after-surgery instructions · Cornell Feline Health Center, "Spaying and Neutering" · American Association of Feline Practitioners, Cat Friendly Homes, "How Do I Know If My Cat Is In Pain?" · Ohio State University Indoor Pet Initiative · Tufts Lerner Spay/Neuter Clinic, "Aftercare" · Merck Veterinary Manual, "Recognizing and Assessing Pain in Animals."



NEED TO STEP AWAY DURING RECOVERY?

A veterinary professional can follow the plan at home.

Recovery can last days or weeks, and plans don't always wait. A VetterCare veterinary professional can follow your veterinarian's written discharge instructions at home: giving medications as prescribed, and keeping an eye on comfort, appetite, the litter box and the incision. Your cat stays home, in a calm and familiar place. You get photo updates while you're away, and you meet your veterinary professional in person before you leave.

vettercare.com

(844) 697-3871

In-home care across Greater Phoenix, Tucson, Prescott and Dallas–Fort Worth.

VetterCare gathers this information from published veterinary sources. It is general information, not veterinary advice, and doesn't replace an exam by your veterinarian. VetterCare veterinary professionals follow your veterinarian's instructions. If your pet is experiencing an emergency, contact your veterinarian or the nearest emergency animal hospital right away.

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