



**Good Friends  
Animal  
Hospital**

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## *Anesthesia – Is It Safe?*

Almost on a daily basis veterinarians hear “I don’t want him to be anesthetized. Something might happen!” Yes, something might happen. But something might also happen while he’s playing at home.

Anesthesia means the absence of consciousness and pain sensations. Because pets won’t just lie still when we tell them to, veterinarians often must rely on sedation or anesthesia to properly perform many procedures. By eliminating pain and fear, anesthesia can allow procedures to be done more thoroughly and quickly and provide a better outcome for your pet.

There are a wide variety of anesthetics available and combinations are often used. Inhaled gas is common and is very safe and fast. The procedure being performed and the condition of your pet will determine the method used.

The general health of your pet is an important consideration when considering anesthesia and surgery. A young healthy pet will tolerate almost any anesthetic. An older pet with heart, liver or kidney problems will need to be watched more closely. To look for underlying health problems, a physical examination and laboratory tests are performed ahead of time. If we know what problems your pet has, we can either modify the anesthetic protocol or cancel the procedure temporarily. Other medications and intravenous fluids will help your pet maintain normal body functions while he is anesthetized. A tube is placed in the throat for oxygen. During anesthesia we monitor heart rate and respiration. We schedule surgeries in the morning so our patients are waking up by early afternoon. Most animals totally recover from the effects within 24 hours and many within just a few hours.

Generally speaking anesthesia is an extremely safe and necessary procedure. We anesthetize hundreds of pets every year and it’s rare to have a serious complication. Newer anesthetics have made it much safer. As with most medical procedures, there is some risk involved with anesthesia. But usually the risk is greater from not performing the recommended procedure. The doctors will not advise anesthesia if the risk is too great and we will postpone or cancel procedures when necessary. Your pet’s health and safety are our main concern.