

# What are pre-anesthetic safety features?

## **CAN I IMPROVE THE SAFETY OF PUTTING MY PET UNDER ANESTHESIA? Y E S**

Pre-anesthetic blood screening, EKG screening, and an IV catheter with IV fluids are minimums for human anesthesia and should be in veterinary medicine. Unfortunately, while these safety measures are available for your pets, the additional time it takes and the additional costs has traditionally prevented their widespread use in the past. We want you to know what is best and then allow you to choose your level of care and risk.

### **PRE-ANESTHETIC BLOODWORK – W H Y?**

There are many conditions that might not be readily apparent on an exam that may adversely affect your pets' ability to clear anesthesia properly and to heal from surgery. Blood tests will screen for pre-existing liver and kidney problems, check for normal blood sugar and protein levels, and detect anemia.

### **I V CATHETER AND I V FLUIDS – W H Y?**

Having quick access to a vein by placing an IV catheter & running IV fluids is very important. It is vital in an emergency and also helps prevent unseen damage to vital organs by ensuring adequate blood flow.

### **PRE-OPERATIVE ELECTROCARDIOGRAM ANALYSIS – W H Y?**

By obtaining a heart rhythm screen, we can often detect potentially life threatening heart abnormalities that might be dangerous under anesthesia.

### **PAIN CONTROL – W H Y?**

Older anesthetics often kept our patients groggy for longer periods, thus masking some of the signs of pain. Newer and safer anesthetic medications have allowed us to wake up your pets much faster. This has unveiled our previous lack of good pain control. Also, the nature of animals to hide their vulnerability to predators sometimes prevents accurate assessment of pain. Therefore, for many years the veterinary community underestimated our patients' pain and did little to control it.

We now have excellent medicines to control our pets' pain and we are taking great strides to do a better job in ours and many other veterinary hospitals. Unfortunately, not all hospitals are addressing the changes and some are still quoting procedures with no pain control or using poor methods. If the surgery would cause you pain, then your pet would experience similar pain. A combination of sedatives, local anesthetics, narcotics, and anti-inflammatory medications should be used for balanced pain control. We believe in controlling your pets' pain as if we were the patient.