

Frequently Asked Questions About Cataract Surgery

- What steps are necessary to arrange cataract surgery?
 - ◇ First, a comprehensive examination by a veterinary ophthalmologist is required to assess not only the stage of the cataracts, but also the over-all health of the eyes.
 - ◇ Second, certain diagnostic tests are required to assess the function and health of the retina, the tissue within the eye most important for vision. These test results should be performed 4-12 weeks prior to surgery. **Tests performed past this time frame will no longer be valid and will need to be repeated prior to surgery.** A pre-surgical blood panel with additional urine testing depending on your pet's overall health is also required within 3 months of surgery and can be performed with VOS at the time of retinal testing.
 - ◇ If your pet is found to be a candidate, cataract removal can then be scheduled.

- What can I expect the day of surgery?
 - ◇ All surgery patients check in between 7 and 7:30 a.m. They should be fasted and prepared according to our Pre-Surgical Instructions handout. One of our surgery technicians will speak with you briefly to answer any questions you may have and discuss some routine questions about your pet.
 - ◇ All of our procedures are outpatient, so no pets are hospitalized overnight with us. We strive to have all surgical patients ready for discharge between 1 and 5 p.m. We will review all of your aftercare instructions with you in detail at the time of pick-up.

- Will my pet see immediately following the surgery?
 - ◇ Cataract patients usually have *some* increase in visual acuity immediately following surgery, but as with humans, the healing process takes several weeks and it may take up to 8 weeks to achieve the final result.
 - ◇ As with any surgical procedure, **results are not guaranteed**; however, we strive to have the most up-to-date methods and protocols to allow for the best possible outcome. Unforeseen complications can occur, and your veterinary ophthalmologist will address any potential risks with you prior to surgery.

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- What is the aftercare involved with cataract surgery?
 - ◇ **A rigid plastic Elizabethan collar (often referred to as a “cone”) must be worn throughout the 3-4 week healing process.** This is critical for the protection of their incision.
 - ◇ Aftercare during the 1st week following surgery can be intensive. We ask that you take your personal schedule into account before committing to cataract surgery for your pet, as most will go home on 4-6 topical medications and 2-4 oral medications immediately following surgery. Provided your pet is healing appropriately, medications are decreased starting at the 1 week post-operative visit, but **all cataract patients require topical medications long term regardless of their surgical outcome.** Most pets are maintained on 1-2 topical medications to minimize the risk of inflammation unless they have other underlying ophthalmic conditions.
 - ◇ **Every cataract surgical patient must return for an examination within 24 hours following surgery** to assess inflammation and to check intraocular pressures. Medications may be adjusted at this time. This first post-operative visit is included in your surgery fees unless new medications are prescribed or additional diagnostics are needed. **All subsequent visits will incur normal office visit fees.**
 - ◇ Following the 24 hour examination, recheck examinations are required at 1 week post-surgery, 3-4 weeks post-surgery, and 3 months post-surgery. Pets experiencing complications may need more frequent post-operative visits following the procedure. Those that continue to do well following these first visits are routinely examined every 6 months.

- What is the cost of cataract surgery?
 - ◇ The cost of cataract surgery varies with the weight of your pet and concurrent medical conditions such as diabetes, cardiac disorders, and other eye problems such as glaucoma. We provide personalized cost estimates to all of our clients when any surgical procedure is being considered.