
Cataract Removal Aftercare Information

Your pet has undergone delicate intraocular surgery. As with any other surgery, aftercare is very important in determining how well your pet will recover. There are many things that need close attention from you in order to keep the recovery smooth and uneventful. Below are some of the common concerns of owners, but if you notice anything out of the ordinary, please contact us. It is better to be safe than sorry!

Vision

Your pet's vision should be, in most cases, noticeably improved, immediately after surgery. It will take some time for them to adjust to wearing the E-collar, so do not be alarmed if they are bumping into things. It is not uncommon for your pet to be squinting during the first 24 hours following surgery; after that, the eyes should remain open and comfortable.

Redness

For up to 2 weeks after surgery (sometimes longer), the white part of your pet's eye where the incision is will be red. This is normal. If you notice your pet's eyes are only slightly pink and then become very inflamed, you should contact us immediately. When in doubt about whether the amount of redness is normal, please call.

Discharge

It is normal for your pet to have slight yellow or pinkish discharge for a few days after surgery. White or clear discharge is also normal. If your pet lives with other canine housemates that enjoy grooming his or her face, this should be avoided for the time the E-collar is in place. Any discharge (either from the eyes or from medication spilling over the eyelids) on the face can cause irritation to the skin, and should be gently cleaned away. A damp washcloth usually works well. Do not use any soap near your pet's eyes.

Sutures

Your pet has sutures in the upper part of the eye where the clear cornea meets the white sclera. These sutures dissolve on their own, but may cause a slight reaction as they are healing. They may become slightly raised, slightly red, or may turn the cornea cloudy around the incision as they heal and form a scar. Applying medications to this area will not hurt your pet or the sutures, but please use caution so that no injury is sustained to the area around the sutures.

Elizabethan Collar (E-collar)

It is crucial that your pet not be allowed to scratch or rub his or her eyes during the post-operative recovery period of cataract surgery. The E-collar will remain in place for 3-4 weeks. The doctor will advise you when the E-collar can be removed. Supervision is necessary as your pet adapts to the E-collar. Your pet may be hesitant to eat, drink, or perform normal bodily functions during the first day or two, however this will improve with time. Encourage them with positive feedback. It is important to keep the E-collar clean in an attempt to prevent skin irritation. Refer to the E-collar handout for additional helpful hints.

Bathing

Please do not bathe your pet until you are advised to remove the E-collar.

Activity

For the first 2 weeks, we recommend leash walking with the aid of a harness, as opposed to allowing your pet to run freely in the yard. Dog parks and doggie day cares should also be avoided. The harness is preferred, because it puts less pressure on your pet's neck and is therefore less likely to increase the pressure inside the eyes. Any rough-housing should be avoided for now, as well as ball-throwing, running, jumping up or down from furniture, and running up and down stairs. If your pet enjoys shaking toys or playing tug, it is best to put these toys out of sight until your pet has completely healed from surgery. We don't recommend any strenuous activities or over excitement, as this can raise systemic blood pressure, which can elevate intraocular pressure. Swimming is prohibited for at least 3 months.

Treats

Treats are a great way to reward your pet after receiving their medications. With the frequency of administration it is important not to overdo it and encourage an upset stomach. Hard treats such as rawhides, chew bones, and "Greenies" should be avoided for the first few weeks. It is also very important to avoid fatty treats for the first 3 months after surgery, because these can lead to fatty deposits within the eyes.

Medications

Please do not run out of medications or discontinue administration prematurely. It is important to continue treating your pet until his or her next appointment. We are able to mail medications to your home, phone them into a human pharmacy, determine if your local veterinarian can dispense them, or you may come by and pick them up at our clinic. If you are running low and are unsure, please contact our office.

Cough

Some patients experience tracheal irritation from the anesthesia intubation. If this occurs, it should resolve after a couple of days. Feeding your pet soft food can be helpful. If a cough persists or worsens, please contact the office or your regular veterinarian.

Things to be concerned about!

Most of the time our patients recover without complications, but things can develop that require our attention. If you are observing any of the following symptoms, please contact us as soon as you are able. The sooner we are aware of concerns, the faster we can address them. If the office is closed, or your call is not answered by a staff member, you can reach a doctor by selecting the emergency mailbox (option 1) on our voicemail prompt. Please leave your name, telephone number and a brief message relaying your concerns. The doctor on call will return your call. If you have not received a return call within 20 minutes, please phone again and leave another message. We are always available to assist you in an emergency.

- Vision loss
- Squinting that persists or worsens after the first 24- 48 hours post-operatively
- Redness or cloudiness inside the eye
- Bulging/swelling of the eye
- Thick yellow or green ocular discharge
- Vomiting, diarrhea, loss of appetite
- Coughing that persists longer than 24- 48 hours, or is preventing your pet from resting comfortably

If you have any questions, please let us know! We strive to provide optimal ocular health and ensure comfort to maximize your pet's quality of life.

Medication Guidelines

1. Medicate with solutions (drops) before ointments. All artificial tears/lubricating medications should be used last.
2. When administering multiple medications at once, wait about 5 five minutes between each one. This allows the previous medication to absorb and keep it from being washed away by the next one.
3. It helps to get your pet up off the floor (if they are small enough) and onto a table or counter when administering treatments.
4. Using one hand, elevate the nose and tip it as straight up as possible, then pull down the lower lid. With the heel of your other hand, push up on the skin above the eye to bring the upper lid up. Use this hand to administer the medication. Make sure that drops make contact with the eyeball.
5. Ointments should be applied on the center of the inside of either the upper or lower eyelid. Gently open and close the eyelids to be sure the ointment coats the eyeball.
6. Always bring all medications with you for all follow-up appointments or surgery.
7. Always give medications the morning before your follow-up appointments unless otherwise directed.
8. **IMPORTANT: Continue all medications as prescribed unless the doctor instructs otherwise.**
9. If medications are running low, please call or email our office to get a refill (refills@vostn.com). Most drugs are also human medications and can be called into a pharmacy, or we can mail them to you with a credit card payment. If you call our office to have medications phoned in to a pharmacy, please have the pharmacy name and telephone number available.
10. Medications may be returned for a full refund as long as they still possess a manufacturer's seal and are within the expiration date. Because our compounded medications and any medication dispensed "by the pill" are not sealed by a manufacturer, we are unable to refund them. Compounded medications include (but are not limited to) Cyclosporine Solution/Ointment, Tacrolimus Solution/Ointment, EDTA Solution/Ointment, and Demecarium Bromide Solution.

If you have any questions, problems, or if your pet experiences any difficulties with any of the medications prescribed, please call our office right away. We are here to help!

For more information, visit our online medication guide at vostn.com/medication

Elizabethan Collars

Your pet has been custom-fitted with a plastic Elizabethan collar, or "E-collar." This will aid in healing by preventing your pet from pawing or rubbing the eye on furniture, carpet, or pillows, and causing further trauma to the eye.

We understand this can be frustrating and inconvenient for pets and owners. But keep in mind that the animals are not aware when they are inflicting further damage to the eye if it is unprotected. Most patients take 1-3 days to adjust, so please refrain from taking the E-collar off or trimming it! The length of the E-collar is very important, since the edge needs to be a certain distance from the eye.

Here are some tips for dealing with e-collar usage:

My pet can't get around very well...

- Pets often have trouble judging distance allowances with the collar on, so expect your pet to bump into walls and furniture.
- Peripheral vision and hearing might also be reduced by the e-collar.
- Do not let your pet outside unattended.

My pet won't move...

- Encourage them with treats and be patient.
- Do your best to keep their routine the same.
- Speaking to your pet with too much sympathy can have an adverse effect.

My pet won't eat or drink...

- Elevate their dish 2-4 inches using a phone book, heavy crock dishes, etc. Try the bottom of a large coffee mug for cats or flat-faced dogs.
- Add junior baby food (chicken or beef) or low-sodium chicken broth to warm food.
- Hand feed and water.

My pet won't go to the bathroom...

- Be patient for the first 12-24 hours.
- For cats, keep their litter clean at all times and use a large box with no top.
- Take dogs out for frequent walks.

- Do call our office if there is no elimination in 24 hours, or if there is straining.

My pet's ears smell...

- Keep their collar dry to decrease ear infections.
- Trim the hair around your pet's face and ears if it's long.

My pet's neck is raw...

- Keep their neck dry.
- Try a sleeve from an old sweatshirt or a few mini-pads taped around the inside edges of the collar as padding.
- Dry with a hair dryer several times a day if moisture is a problem.

My pet needs a bath...

- Bathe only from the neck down. The face may be cleaned with a warm, moist washcloth with no soap, being very careful of the eyes.
- After bathing, make sure the neck is dry.
- Professional grooming is not advised until approved by your doctor.

I have other pets in my household...

- If fellow pets play with the patient and/or lick the patient's eyes, they need to be separated from each other.