

San Diego Pet Hospital Anesthesia Protocol

At San Diego Pet Hospital, we take anesthetic safety very seriously. Our top priority is to maintain your pet's health and comfort throughout the entire anesthetic procedure and to have a successful, uneventful recovery. Our anesthetic protocol has been designed with these goals in mind.

To start, we recommend that pre-anesthetic blood work be done prior to the scheduled procedure. This gives us the most complete picture of your pet's overall health and organ function. It also helps to identify any underlying health conditions that may not have otherwise been detected. Analysis of the pre-anesthetic lab work will allow us to customize an anesthetic plan to specifically meet your pet's needs. If the doctor has any concerns with the pre-anesthetic screen, these will be discussed with you in advance and additional testing may be recommended.

Prior to the anesthetic procedure, each patient is fitted with an IV catheter line. This allows us to administer IV fluids during the procedure, which protects your pet from one of the main side effects of anesthesia—hypotension (low blood pressure). It also ensures that we have immediate access to the circulatory system to administer potentially life-saving medications should there be any unforeseen complications.

Another aspect of our anesthesia protocol that sets us apart from other veterinary clinics is that each and every patient has a technician dedicated solely to monitoring their vitals for the duration of the procedure. This allows the doctor to concentrate on the procedure itself, therefore decreasing the overall time of the procedure. Thorough anesthetic monitoring involves keeping track of and recording the patient's blood pressure, heart rate, oxygen saturation in the blood, respiratory rate, depth of anesthesia, temperature, and IV fluid rate. There is a fine balance to maintaining optimal anesthetic levels—not too much and not too little. Our technicians are trained to monitor trends so that any potential complications or abnormalities are picked up early. By monitoring these parameters we are able to keep the anesthesia as light as possible (which is safer for the pet) while still maintaining their comfort and safety.

We use several strategies to minimize the amount of anesthesia administered, including what is called a "balanced technique". This means using a combination of drugs so that lower doses can be used to achieve the same effect as using a large amount of a single agent. This minimizes the risk of potential adverse side effects. We also routinely make use of local anesthetics and nerve blocks to minimize localized pain and allow us to maintain anesthesia at lower levels.

If you have any questions or concerns, or would like to talk to the doctor in more detail about our anesthetic protocol, please let us know.