



Spay/Neuter Surgery: Postoperative Healing Guide

This guide provides links to videos, images, and editable infographics that can help empower your clients with the knowledge to help their pets through the post-surgical healing process.



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Chapter 1:

Overview of Postoperative Health

Good quality of care for pets undergoing spay/neuter surgery requires attention to detail in all phases of the surgical event: pre-operative, surgery, and postoperative. In this triad of care, the pet parent or pet caretaker is the key guardian of patient care. A comprehensive system to provide postoperative instructions can minimize complications, minimize rechecks, and provide the pet parent with the information they need for a successful recovery for their pet.

[The ASV Guidelines for Spay/Neuter Programs](#) provide the standards that postoperative instructions should be given both in writing and verbally when possible.

The ASPCA Spay Neuter Alliance (ASNA) has created this guide for three primary reasons:

1. To assist your clinic in meeting the ASV Guidelines
2. To provide your clients with easy-to-understand information
3. To maintain clinic efficiencies in releasing 25+ patients per day

The resources contained in this guide can be used as standalone items or can be used in combination with each other to reinforce the postoperative recovery process. You can also mix and match with any other information you already have for your clinic or requirements by your state veterinary board.

Customization Notes

- Elements in the PDF handouts found in this guide have been left editable and can therefore be customized with your logo, contact details, and clinic-specific instructions.
- [Adobe Reader](#) - which is free - is required to insert your logo.
- The graphics in the PDFs are not customizable.
- The videos found in the guide cannot be edited, but have been left generic so can be used by all.



Chapter 2:

“Help Your Pet Heal” Infographic

Fine print, legalese, and too much verbal information included in your postoperative instructions can sometimes have the unintentional effect of hindering client comprehension or retention of the information. By creating easy-to-read, at-a-glance infographics as postoperative instructions, readership will increase and clients will walk away with clearer instructions on how to care for their pet post-surgery.

Incorporating graphics into your postoperative instructions is a great way to present information to clients in a memorable, easy-to-understand format. These downloadable, editable versions of these postoperative instructions, both in English and in Spanish, are available at the below links. Insert your own logo, post-surgical complication policy, and phone number.

These instructions emphasize:

- Carefully monitoring the incision as it heals
- Protecting the incision from getting wet (no baths, licking, etc.)
- Restricting activity and interaction with other pets
- Monitoring the pet for signs of pain or discomfort
- Maintaining a regular diet
- Being alert for any signs of complications
- Encouraging clients to reach out immediately with concerns



Scrotal Technique

Download: [English](#) | [Spanish](#)



Pre-scrotal Technique

Download: [English](#) | [Spanish](#)

Chapter 3:

“Help Your Pet Heal” Video

In addition to the “*Help Your Pet Heal*” infographic, we have produced four short, unbranded, animated videos that reinforce the same material. These can be played on a loop in your lobby during both intake and release, be linked on your website, or emailed/texted to your clients. The QR codes on the “*Help Your Pet Heal*” infographics (see previous chapter) direct clients to the corresponding video.

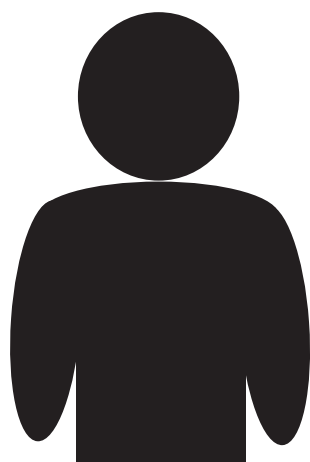
By hearing and seeing the same material repeated in different formats, your clients will be more likely to follow your instructions and be better placed to give their pet(s) the care that they need postoperatively.

There are four versions available, all of which can either be linked directly from YouTube or downloaded and used wherever it is helpful, including uploading to your own YouTube channel. Additionally, we have included .srt files, which can be uploaded to YouTube to provide optional subtitles in both English and Spanish.

1. English narration with English subtitles (Scrotal technique) [View](#)
2. Spanish narration with Spanish subtitles (Scrotal technique) [View](#)
3. English narration with English subtitles (Pre-scrotal technique) [View](#)
4. Spanish narration with Spanish subtitles (Pre-scrotal technique) [View](#)

(The videos cannot be edited, but have been left generic so can be used by all.)

DOWNLOAD
ALL VIDEOS



Chapter 4:

“Prevent Harmful Licking” Infographic

Most clinics either include Elizabethan collars as part of their surgery package or strongly recommend them – and offer traditional plastic Elizabethan collars for sale at their clinic.

We have created handouts to help clients preventing the licking that can cause infections and rechecks after surgery, with the following intentions:

1. Making sure clients know how to fit a collar correctly
2. Making life with a collar easier for their pets
3. Providing alternative options available at pet supply stores

Below you can download unbranded, editable versions of these instructions, both in English and in Spanish. You can add your logo and verbiage specific to your collar policies (although the graphics themselves cannot be customized).

PREVENT HARMFUL LICKING!
Learn how to use your pet's restrictive device

GET THE RIGHT FIT
Snug but not too tight (room for 2 fingers).
Attach your pet's collar (or gauze) to the loops in the cone.
About 2 inches from the nose to edge of the cone.

REMOVE LIDS
FROM LITTERBOXES
7-10 DAYS
Keep the cone on at all times for 7-10 days. Even a little licking can cause problems.
(Keep cats inside during this time.)

KEEP IT CLEAN
Use soap and water. Dry completely before putting back on ASAP!
(Watch your pet doesn't use this time to lick!)

ELEVATE FOOD BOWLS
To help with eating.

MATCH THE PRODUCT WITH YOUR PET'S NEEDS
Hard cone Soft cone Donut Onesie
Available at pet supply stores.

Add your logo here!

English Version

[Download](#)

¡EVITE QUE SE LAMAN Y SE HAGAN DAÑO!
Aprenda cómo usar el cono de restricción para su mascota

ELIJA LA TALLA ADECUADA
Ajuste, pero no demasiado (espacio para 2 dedos).
Coloque el collar (o gaza) de su mascota en los agujeros del cono.
Aproximadamente 2 pulgadas desde la nariz hasta el extremo del cono.

QUITE LAS TAPAS
DE LAS CAJAS DE ARENA
7-10 DÍAS
Mantenga el cono puesto en todo momento de 7-10 días. Incluso un ligero lamido puede causar problemas.
Mantenga a los gatos dentro en este periodo.

MANTÉNGALO LIMPIO
Use agua y jabón. ¡Seque por completo antes de volver a ponerlo de inmediato!
(Evite que su mascota aproveche este momento para lamersel!)

ELEVE LOS TAZONES DE ALIMENTO
Para ayudarlo a comer.

ADAPTE EL PRODUCTO A LAS NECESIDADES DE SU MASCOTA
Cono rígido Cono suave Dona Ropa para mascota
Disponible en tiendas de mascotas.

Spanish Version

[Download](#)

Chapter 5:

Incision Healing Examples

Below, you can download images of the healing process at days 1, 5, and 10 for all patient types. These can be included on your website, handouts, client email communications, and anywhere else that fits into your post-surgical process.

Please note that the images for a male dog are specific to a scrotal approach and therefore should not be used as healing examples for pre-scrotal surgeries.

To accompany these images, we use the following verbiage in our emails (female dog used as an example):

Dear #Name#,

Thank you for visiting ASPCA® Spay/Neuter Alliance for surgery.

The below images show what a normal, routine incision should look like during the healing process and will help you check on #AnimalName#'s progress.



Day 1



Day 5



Day 10

You will note the small green tattoo (which indicates that your pet has been sterilized). It should also heal similarly to those seen in the images.

We hope this will be helpful to you and #AnimalName#. Please feel free to contact our 24-hour helpline at (855) 434-9285 with any questions or concerns.

Help Your Pet Heal!

Watch our postoperative healing video: [English](#) | [Español](#)

View our tips to prevent harmful licking: [English](#) | [Español](#)

Routine surgeries do not include unusual surgeries such as larger incisions for pregnancy or uterine infection, which will be specifically described in the "go-home" notes for your pet.


**DOWNLOAD ALL
INCISION IMAGES** →

Chapter 6:

Putting the Resources Together

This is how ASNA uses the resources as part of our comprehensive post-surgical process:

1. We prepare our clients ahead of time for postoperative instructions by providing links to our “*Help Your Pet Heal*” and “*Preventing Harmful Licking*” infographics in our pre-surgery communications.
2. We print the “*Help Your Pet Heal*” infographics in bulk and use the reverse side to print each patient’s receipt/visit summary. This includes any custom surgical notes (see image). Any go-home meds are attached to this paper, as well as any microchip card.
3. We also print the “*Preventing Harmful Licking*” infographic in bulk and send home with every public patient wearing an Elizabethan collar.
4. As we offer curbside release, a trained staff member brings the receipt/infographic to the client once they arrive. They briefly review the instructions and provide emphasis on any findings on the exam or in the surgical process (patient was in heat, longer incision, staples on the incision, etc.). We also review instructions for go-home medications. The patient is brought out after these verbal instructions are given, to avoid distractions.
5. Since we also offer curbside check-out, the “*Help Your Pet Heal*” videos are accessible via the QR codes on the printed out infographic we provide, from our website, and from links included in our post-surgical emails to clients.
6. These emails are sent to each client the day after surgery. As seen in the previous chapter, this communication contains:
 - Incision healing images specific to their pet (female dog, male dog, female cat, or male cat).
 - Links to the “*Help Your Pet Heal*” videos (in English and Spanish).
 - Links to the “*Preventing Harmful Licking*” infographic (in English and Spanish).
 - A reminder how to reach us with questions or postoperative concerns.

ASPCA VISIT SUMMARY	
Service Date: 6/9/2025 Animal Description: Female Cat - 1.00 yr, 5.8 mo Breed: Domestic Long Hair Color: Brown Tabby White Weight: 3.13 kilograms (multiply by 2.2 for pounds) Animal ID: 25-8822 Microchip #: (if requested) 90005001602062	
Owner: Mama Beatrice Forever Friends E C H	Services Received: Cat Spay Rabies 1 year vaccine FVRCP Vaccine Microchip Nail Trim
Rabies Certificate Visit date: 6/9/2025 Expires: 6/9/2026 Tag #: 5645 Rabies vaccine: One Year Manufacturer: Merial Vaccine lot #: Serial #750912 Lot #776628 Lot expiration: 11/1/2026	Keep for future reference Rabies vaccine not given if information is blank Veterinarian: Leon Tu NC license: 10159 
Dr. Leon Tu's Observations We offer 24-hour assistance at (855) 434-8285. However, please call us early in the day as possible if you have a concern, to give us time to arrange any medical visits that may be needed. We recommend that you establish a wellness program with your regular veterinarian. Your pet received a spay surgery (ovariohysterectomy) and the incision is directly on her belly. A small amount of swelling at the incision site may be expected. Unless otherwise noted, there are no sutures/staples to remove. Your pet received a PetEstablished microchip today. The included tag is specific to your pet's microchip and should be placed on their collar. The QR code on the tag can be scanned by the finder of your lost pet, providing them with your contact information. Your pet has been registered with the information located at the top of this paperwork. To update your pet's microchip registration, use the link in the email you receive for PetEstablished. Your pet received meloxicam, a non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug (NSAID) for management of pain and inflammation. DO NOT give your pet human pain relievers such as aspirin, Advil, or Tylenol, as these medications can be toxic to your pet. Your pet was in heat at the time of surgery. Separate her from intact males for a minimum of ten days to allow the internal surgical sites to heal.	

Visit Summary Example

Note: The software we use (Clinic HQ) has features which send automated emails and/or texts at prescribed times. Many of our patients come to us via our shelter and rescue partners. In these cases, we do not usually have direct contact with the owners, so our shelter partners provide the physical and verbal go-home instructions. By connecting with these clients via these emails/texts, however, we can still ensure that the postoperative instructions are consistent and comprehensive.