



## Lake Side Animal Hospital Newsletter – August 2013

### Cheaper is not always better.

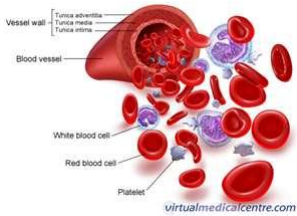
Dear Pet Owner,

As pet owners we are all concerned about the risks associated with anesthesia and surgery. Anesthesia and surgery is a more exact science than you might expect. The safety of general anesthesia is dependent upon the anesthesia agent, equipment used, the methods of patient monitoring, patient status and the expertise of the people involved. The safety of general anesthesia is dramatically improved by giving adequate attention to each of these areas.



LSAH Surgery Suite

### Price Shopping



**The Dangers of Price Shopping for Surgery;** affordability is important, and procedures should be as cost effective as possible, but to sacrifice the safety of patients to cut costs is unthinkable.

Veterinarians for a variety of reasons frequently perform surgical procedures requiring general anesthesia. Many are routine, such as spays and neuters, but just because they are done often does not mean they should be considered minor procedures. Any procedure that creates an unconscious state has inherent risks associated with it. Minimizing these risks is important to increase your pet's chances of a successful outcome.

Shopping for the least expensive service for routine surgeries, many times does not help minimize these risks. Differences in cost, associated with surgeries, often come from what is included and what is not. For example, cost can depend on:

- What pre-anesthetic precautions are taken
- What anesthetics and pain medications are used
- What procedure is done
- How much anesthetic monitoring is used during the procedure
- What post-surgical care is offered

Choosing the least expensive quote can mean cutting corners on quality, comfort and most importantly the safety of your pet.

At Lake Side Animal Hospital we understand the need for affordability and strive to keep our procedures as cost effective as possible, but we are not willing to sacrifice the safety of our patients to cut costs.

Lake Side Animal Hospital requires that all of our patients have four very important things done prior to surgery.

1. A complete physical exam before surgery to make sure that they are healthy and can be safely anesthetized.
2. Blood work to make sure that there are no underlying illnesses that might have gone undetected on a physical exam. This also makes sure that your pet is able to handle anesthesia safely and in a predictable manner. The exam and blood work also allows us to tailor your pet's pre and post-operative pain medications so that we can make them as comfortable as possible after the surgery without causing them any harm.
3. We believe in pre-medicating all patients before surgical procedures. This means giving them a pain medication to help control pain during and after surgery.
4. All senior animals that have surgery also have an intravenous catheter placed before anesthesia is induced. We feel as if this is of paramount importance. This catheter allows us to give lifesaving medication immediately if complications arise. It also is used for giving fluids throughout the procedure to help maintain blood pressure and organ perfusion while at the same time speeding up anesthetic recovery time.

**Anesthesia Monitoring** Every pet that is under anesthesia has a trained technician who is solely dedicated to monitoring their level of anesthesia and their vital signs. To aid in this important role we utilize an electrocardiogram, a pulse ox meter, a respiratory monitor and a blood pressure monitor. The monitors enable us to closely assess the depth of anesthesia, and your pets response to anesthesia/surgery, therefore allowing us to correct any issues before they become a problem for your pet. This in-depth monitoring and specialized equipment is not inexpensive but we believe that it is necessary in order to provide the best care for our patients.

**We strive to prevent hypothermia (low body temperature).** There is evidence which shows hypothermia can severely compromise our pet during surgery by causing prolonged recovery times, clotting abnormalities and even cardiac arrhythmias. We utilize fluid warmed heating pads during surgery, and every pet has a warmed towel or blanket in their kennel for after surgery. We use a second towel or blanket to cover them with so they stay warm and comfortable while recovering.

**Pain Control.** is also a huge priority for any surgery patient. We utilize opioids and anti-inflammatory drugs to block pain from being perceived and to control it after surgery. This is very important to ensure a comfortable, happy patient, as well as to help speed healing.

Although all of these preventatives are not absolutely necessary to spay or neuter an animal, they have greatly reduced anesthetic deaths, alleviate pain and suffering, and help prevent surgical complications. We believe that we owe it to you and your pets to treat them with the best care possible and to provide the safest surgical environment possible. We understand that surgery day is scary for you and your loved one, and we will use every precaution we can to ensure it is safe and as pain free as possible. So please if you do decide to price shop remember to ask questions on what they provide for your pet during and after surgery.

Sincerely,  
Becky Fletcher (Public Contact)  
Lake Side Animal Hospital

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