



Post-Operative Care and Recovery Information

Confine Cats Indoors After Surgery (time periods are approximate, based on recovery progress)

- **Males – 24 hours**
- **Females – 3 days**
- **Pregnant females – 5 days**, or as recommended by veterinarian
- **Lactating (nursing) females** with uncaptured kittens who cannot yet eat on their own – release same day when fully awake so she can return to her kittens. **MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO AVOID TRAPPING MOTHERS WITH YOUNG KITTENS** (a potentially life-threatening situation for the kittens)
- **Cats with infections** (abscesses, for example) who are prescribed antibiotics will generally be confined for 7–10 days while medication is given

Males can be held in trap until release. Females will require more space, such as a larger cage or dog crate. Cage transfers are a two-person job: Take the cage/crate to a small **enclosed** area. Cover both the trap and the cage/crate and place them against each other, entry door to entry door, then slowly uncover just the trap. The cat should move to the darker, “safer” space of the cage/crate.

Monitor and Keep Comfortable

During recovery, **keep cat indoors** in a quiet, warm, draft-free area such as a bathroom, spare bedroom, or climate-controlled garage. While still recovering from the effects of anesthesia, cats can’t regulate their body temperature, so you must ensure they are **kept warm in cool/cold weather** and **don't get overheated in hot weather**. Don't place trap on a cold or damp bare floor without layering towels or blankets underneath. Continue to keep the trap covered. Do not attempt to touch the cat. Check frequently throughout the first night. If the cat is bleeding, vomiting, having difficulty breathing, or not waking up, call the emergency contact number provided at check-out. If cat is vomiting, his/her head should be turned to avoid choking. Do so by tipping the trap somewhat so that the cat's position shifts. Do not place the cat back in vomit. **CAUTION:** only open the door or handle the cat in event of extreme emergency and **ONLY** if you are confident you will not be hurt in the process. Do so in an enclosed area and wear thick gloves to decrease possible injury.

Food and Water

Water should be offered the evening of surgery n . Canned, moist food may also be offered. You can do so by placing water/ food on a plastic lid. Cautiously lift the back door of the trap so that only a small gap is open. Slide the lid into the trap quickly without putting your hand inside. Always **relock the door**. Canned food is preferable during recovery because it is more easily digested.

Changing Trap Paper

You may need to remove and replace soiled newspaper. Only lift the door the smallest amount to pull out the newspaper. If you are unable to slide fresh newspaper in, **DO NOT** reach your hand inside or lift the door further. Instead, place the trap on top of folded newspaper to absorb any waste.

Releasing the Cat

Internal sutures (stitches) and surgical glue are used to close the incision site. **The sutures are not removed.** After confining for the period of time listed at the top of this page, cats are ready for release if they are alert, clear-eyed, and not displaying any signs of problems related to their surgery. **Return them to where they were trapped - do not relocate!** Relocation without proper acclimating procedure removes the cats from their “home” and food source. They would likely try to find their way back and get disoriented, hurt or killed along the way. The best time for release is dusk or very early morning, when it's quieter and darkness provides cover for the cat. Provide food and water. Before use by another cat, clean the trap and spray with a disinfectant, such as a light bleach/water solution.

This information has been adapted from www.alleycat.org and www.fixourferals.org. These websites have extensive information and instructions about the entire process of Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) and caring for feral/free-roaming cats and kittens.