

Excellent  
medicine  
with heart  
mind and soul



## ANESTHESIA & PAIN MANAGEMENT

**Veterinary Specialty Center is the only private veterinary hospital in the United States with two board certified anesthesiologists.**

Our Anesthesia and Pain Management Service is comprised of Drs. Sarkar and Fischer and a team of veterinary technicians and assistants. They design protocols that minimize risk while optimizing pain relief.

Our anesthesia team is not only available for elective surgeries, but is also consulted on all after hours and emergency surgeries making Veterinary Specialty Center the only Chicagoland veterinary facility that has 24 hour coverage by board certified anesthesiologists and board certified surgeons.

### POTENTIAL COMPLICATIONS

**Potential complications are rare in healthy pets undergoing elective procedures but can include:**

#### GENERAL ANESTHESIA

Potential complications may include drug-induced low blood pressure (hypotension); respiratory or cardiac arrest; loss of airway; fluid overload; acute failure of organs such as the kidneys or liver; neurologic dysfunction such as blindness, coma or death.

#### LOCOREGIONAL ANESTHESIA

Potential complications may include failure of the anesthetic technique; drug-induced low blood pressure (hypotension); bleeding; adverse reactions to the drugs being administered including drug toxicity, allergic reactions; infection; complications involving the nervous system which although rare, may result in temporary or permanent paralysis; urinary retention; pruritus (itchiness); slow re-growth of hair over the injection site.

### THERE ARE TWO MAIN TYPES OF ANESTHESIA:

1) **GENERAL ANESTHESIA** is a drug-induced state of unconsciousness that enables veterinarians to perform surgery or other therapeutic and diagnostic procedures that would otherwise not be possible on awake animal patients. General anesthesia is produced by injecting drugs into your pet's blood stream and/or by your pet breathing an anesthetic gas.

2) **LOCOREGIONAL ANESTHESIA** may include:

Nerve blocks which involve making numb only that part of the body to be operated on, for example a leg. The nerves that give feeling to the area being operated on are "blocked" by the local anesthetic so that pain cannot be felt.

Epidurals which involve injecting a local anesthetic drug or an analgesic drug such as morphine around the spinal cord. In some situations, the anesthesiologist may feel that it is necessary to place a catheter in the epidural space. This allows pain medication to be given continuously for up to seven days.

**Both types of anesthesia** are frequently used in combination in order to increase the safety of anesthesia while optimizing pain relief. With the various blocks, your pet will be free of pain while the block lasts, but will not be able to use the forelimb or hindlimb for 18-24 hours; however, some blocks could last up to 30 hours.

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## PROCEDURE

- Prior to anesthesia, the anesthesia team will review your pet's medical records and perform a pre-anesthetic physical examination. After this evaluation, there may be additional diagnostic tests they believe will help minimize anesthetic risks. If this is the case, you will be contacted to discuss these tests along with the costs associated with them in order to get your consent.
- An anesthetic protocol is designed specific to your pet's needs taking into account the pre-anesthesia evaluation, age, breed and size of your pet as well as the procedure (surgery) that will be performed. This protocol includes drugs to be used, pain management (epidural, nerve blocks, or injectable medications), precautions, and monitoring.
- After anesthetic induction (placing your pet under general anesthesia), your pet is placed on intravenous fluids and monitoring/support equipment to evaluate and control heart rate and rhythm, respiratory rate, volume and quality, blood pressure, body temperature and blood oxygenation.
- Sometimes more advanced methods of monitoring and supportive care are required to keep your pet safe. These may include, but are not limited to, ventilator support for breathing, a constant rate infusion of medications to maintain blood pressure and heart rate and specific catheters to monitor arterial blood pressure.
- Analgesic procedures (epidural, nerve blocks) are performed if indicated and your pet is brought into surgery where the monitoring and support continues until the procedure is completed.
- Patients recover from anesthesia in our recovery ward (or ICU if necessary) where they are monitored and treated for pain as necessary.

## AFTER ANESTHESIA

When your pet is discharged from the hospital, there may be several areas on its body that have been clipped of hair to allow us to quickly, safely and efficiently carry out epidural injections, nerve blocks, insert catheters, and attach monitoring devices to your pet. There may also be small patches of dried adhesive that are used to fix the catheters in place. The hair will slowly grow back and the adhesive will rub off as new skin grows underneath it.

If at any time you have questions about the anesthetic management of your pet while it is at the Veterinary Specialty Center, please do not hesitate to request a consultation with a member of the anesthesia team. We are here to keep your pet safe and comfortable and to help keep you informed. If your pet is scheduled to have anesthesia performed at your primary care veterinarian and there is some concern for anesthetic safety or pain management, your veterinarian is welcome to call and request a consultation with our anesthesia staff.



FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

Veterinary Specialty Center  
Department of Anesthesia  
& Pain Management  
1515 Busch Parkway  
Buffalo Grove, IL 60089

847.459.7535 *phone*  
847.808.8900 *fax*  
apm@vetspecialty.com  
www.vetspecialty.com

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