



Pain Management At PetDocks Veterinary Hospital

At PetDocks Veterinary Hospital, we take our roles as stewards and advocates for our patients' well being very seriously. As part of our commitment to providing your pet with the very best care possible, we have instituted a comprehensive approach to pain management for all surgical patients, as well as those patients suffering from chronic diseases, such as arthritis, cancer, and other painful conditions.

The pain associated with surgery is detrimental to the overall healing process as well as to the general well being of any animal or person. Pain often results in a prolonged hospital stay and increases the potential for secondary problems such as immune suppression and secondary illness, loss of appetite and deterioration of body condition.

Some pain persisting into the post-operative period was once thought to be beneficial, encouraging immobility and promoting healing and recovery. However, we know now that postoperative pain may actually delay recovery due to a number of significant negative side effects. Immobility, for example, can actually retard healing and decrease lung function. Pain increases adrenaline release and increases cardiac work and oxygen consumption. Stress hormone release, loss of appetite and insomnia all lead to an overall stressful state and can contribute to prolonged recovery times. Most importantly, postoperative pain leads to patient suffering. In addition, contrary to what was thought 5 or 10 years ago, analgesics do not disguise the signs of patient deterioration and should not be withheld for this reason.

There is wide variation in how our pets respond to painful stimuli, depending on the species, age, and type of procedure or condition affecting the pet. Young pets tend to be more vocal, whereas adults, especially older pets tend to contain their emotions. Cats and many older pets of other species tend to withdraw and remain quiet through a wide range of painful experiences.

For surgical procedures, it has been thoroughly documented that long-term pain control is better if the pet does not experience a great deal of pain in the post-operative period. It is always harder to control pain once it has occurred, with higher doses of drug resulting in reduced safety for the pet.

At PetDocks Veterinary Hospital we incorporate a variety of proactive pain management techniques and medications, prior to, during, and following all surgery procedures. Doing so helps our surgery patients recover more quickly and completely and improves their quality of life and well-being.