

# Preparing for Surgery Day (RABBITS)

## Food And Water

Unlike dogs and cats, rabbits do not need to be fasted before surgery. In fact, fasting can interfere with proper function of their gastrointestinal tracts and may delay recovery from surgery.

Please provide the normal diet and water for your pet up the time they are brought in for surgery.

Please bring along some of your pet's normal diet in plastic bags with your pet's name written on them. Please include any pelleted or dry diet you may be using along with a small amount of favorite fresh foods.

## ARRIVAL

We like to check them in between 8-9 am before the days surgery start.

Pick up times will depend on their recovery time and your availability.

Most are ready to go home by mid afternoon.

## SURGICAL CONSENT FORM

You will be asked to fill out a surgical consent form. Please read it carefully

## POST SURGICAL INSTRUCTIONS

**Home Care Instructions** Your rabbit will be very tired and needs to rest tonight. He/she should be housed only with his/her normal cage mates. Having well established bonded cage mates present during recovery can reduce stress. However, if you notice any fighting, please remove him/her to a private area for at least three days. Avoid excessive handling tonight and provide subdued light and quiet. Use the normal housing setup but keep it very clean, changing the bedding daily for the next five days. Pelleted bedding, paper towels or shredded newspaper is best. Offer food and water immediately upon returning home – healthy treat foods, greens and fruits or vegetables may be particularly appreciated (see diet recommendations on [www.veterinarypartner.com](http://www.veterinarypartner.com) Small Mammal Series (Rabbit Care and Suggested Vegetables and Fruits for a Rabbit Diet). Rabbits should be eating some food and producing stools and urine by late morning following the surgery. The appetite will be initially reduced as will the number of stools. Some stools may be softer, clumped or smaller at first. If your rabbit is not eating anything or producing any stool or urine by the morning after the surgery, please let us know if we are not available consult a local exotic animal veterinarian immediately. Normal alertness/activity, stool consistency and appetite should gradually increase back to normal over the next three to four days. Your rabbit may receive fluids under the skin between the shoulders after surgery to speed recovery by preventing dehydration, speeding the removal of anesthetic

agents, and keeping the GI tract and urinary tract in good condition. These fluids are absorbed slowly into the body over a few hours. There may still be a soft jelly-like lump under the skin in the area over the shoulders or along the sides or bottom of the chest when your rabbit goes home. There is no cause for alarm as this will be completely gone by bedtime. Check your rabbit's incision 2 x daily – do this by gently lifting him up and letting him stand on his hind legs while examining the area – if you are having difficulty visualizing the area you can do this in front of a mirror. Avoid putting your friend on his back! All sutures are internal and the skin will be completely healed in 7 to 10 days. It is necessary to clean the incision. Spay incisions are in the middle of the abdomen – there will likely be green tattoo ink and purple surgical glue on the skin. Castrations usually have two small incisions near the top of the scrotum with purple surgical glue present – the scrotal sacs may swell almost to the pre-surgical size for up to 5 days after surgery and then gradually reduce to a fraction of their former size. In both spays and castrations look for signs of bleeding, discharge, open incisions (spays), excessive swelling and redness along the incision – if any of these are seen it is best to have your rabbit examined by an exotic animal veterinarian immediately. Limit exercise for the next 10 days to avoid jumping on and off furniture and stairs. Rabbits sometimes produce an orange to brownish red colored pigment in their urine, when eating certain foods and also after a stressful, experience such as surgery. This is normal. Do not confuse this with blood, which will be bright red and is rare after surgery. Do not put male castrated rabbits together with unspayed females for at least 1 month after surgery because there can still be viable sperm living in the remaining ducts of the reproductive tract for 3 to 4 weeks.