

What to expect from your experience with the Soft Tissue Surgery Service

General Information

- Please have all of your pet's records emailed to the Soft Tissue Surgery (STS) Service prior to the consultation (OSUVET.surgery@osu.edu). This will expedite your pet's consultation and avoid duplication of medical tests.
- Please do not feed your pet after 10 p.m. the night before the visit; water is fine, but no late snacks or breakfast. This is to reduce the risk of complications should your pet need to be sedated or have blood drawn for diagnostics.
- Please arrive 15 minutes prior to the appointment, allowing time to check-in and register your pet with the surgery service.
- If your pet has any special needs — such as behavioral issues, infectious diseases or other special medical conditions — please let the patient care staff know and we will direct you to a designated area.
- Be prepared for a full day at the Ohio State Veterinary Medical Center (VMC). Most visits take between two to six hours to complete.
We are often able to complete a full diagnostic work-up for surgical planning and have preliminary results the day of your visit. This allows many pets to have surgery the following day, but it does take time to facilitate these diagnostic tests.
Should your pet need additional detailed diagnostics or medical treatment before a surgical procedure, surgery may be rescheduled for a later date.
- Please be aware that appointment days (Tuesdays and Thursdays) are reserved for consultations only. Surgery is typically performed the following day (Wednesdays and Fridays). Surgery is **not** performed the same day as your pet's consultation.
- Please be aware that patients with emergency surgery needs may come into the hospital overnight through the Emergency Service and are transferred to the Soft Tissue Surgery Service the following morning for surgery.
Should this occur on a day that your pet is scheduled for surgery, it is possible that we may need to change the time of your pet's surgery or reschedule your pet's procedure at a later date.
We make every effort to avoid rescheduling any patients. Scheduling of patients in surgery is based on the level of need, availability of operating rooms and availability of anesthesia staff.
- Please bring your pet's current medications and/or special diets with you to the consultation.

Checking In

- At arrival, please go to the front reception area and check in with your pet. A member of the patient care team will compile the chart and let the surgery service know you are waiting.
- Any time you leave the waiting area to go outside (walk your pet, go to the car, leave to get coffee/food, etc.), please notify the reception staff before you leave and when you return. This will ensure that the surgery service can promptly find you for your pet's consultation.



Soft Tissue Surgery Service - continued

Consultation

- A fourth-year veterinary student will come talk to you about the reason for your pet's visit, acquire a general history and discuss the primary concerns for your pet.
- Your pet will leave the consultation room with the student and will be examined by a surgery resident and attending faculty surgeon in our treatment area. Please wait in the lobby during this time and do not leave the waiting area. It generally takes 30 to 60 minutes to complete the examination, review medical records and discuss a treatment plan.
- After your pet has been examined and reviewed by an attending faculty surgeon, a veterinarian will come speak with you about a diagnostic and potential surgical plan for your pet. This may be an intern, resident, faculty, or any combination thereof. Regardless of who speaks to you about the diagnostic plan, your pet's care is supervised by an attending faculty surgeon.
- If further diagnostic tests can be performed on the day of consultation, we may ask that you return to the hospital later in the afternoon (often between 3 and 5 p.m.) to review these test results.
- Once the diagnostics are completed and you return in the afternoon, a veterinarian will discuss surgical options, medical prognosis and any potential complications associated with surgery. We will also answer any questions you may have about your pet's care and provide you with an approximate estimate of costs.

Surgery

- If your pet is scheduled for surgery the following day, your pet will stay overnight in our surgical treatment area under close supervision. A definitive surgery time will not be provided because we are also responsible for surgical emergencies each day. However, be assured that you will be contacted with any important updates by a surgical team member.
- Why are pets hospitalized overnight before surgery? By hospitalizing your pet, it provides us with the assurance that your pet is appropriately fasted for general anesthesia and surgery, receives any necessary medications during the preoperative period and allows your pet to acclimate to the hospital environment prior to general anesthesia.
- Under certain circumstances, some pets cannot be hospitalized the evening prior to surgery. We can arrange a drop-off time for surgery on the day of the scheduled procedure. This is uncommon and only approved in special circumstances.
Surgical drop-offs are only scheduled between 7:15 and 7:30 a.m. Patients admitted as a drop-off must be reevaluated with an updated medical record before the anesthesia service can review the patient and make a specific anesthetic plan. In general, patients admitted as a drop-off the morning of the procedure will be scheduled in the afternoon for surgery. If a patient arrives late for the drop-off appointment, it may result in rescheduling the surgical or diagnostic procedure.
- Your pet will recover from surgery and stay in the hospital the night after surgery for observation and administration of effective pain management. Depending on the nature of your pet's condition, it will stay in the hospital for a minimum of two nights (the night prior to surgery following the consultation and the night after surgery).
If your pet is sick, needs intensive care or experiences any surgical complications, a longer stay may be necessary. We will discuss the anticipated time your pet will remain in hospital at the consultation.



Soft Tissue Surgery Service - continued

Visitation

- To reduce the stress and anxiety of your pet during the postoperative recovery period, we do not allow visitations the day of surgery. You are welcome to visit the day after surgery if your pet is not scheduled to be discharged (15 to 20 minute visits). We will schedule a time with you to facilitate the visitation. Please do not arrive without scheduling a time with the surgery service first.

Communication

- You will be called twice daily with an update about your pet (mornings between 8 and 11 a.m. and evenings between 4 and 9 p.m.). Please allow us time to call you in the mornings and evenings before calling to check on your pet during these times.

On the day of surgery, you will be called three times: both morning and evening updates and also immediately following surgery and recovery. A student, surgery resident or attending faculty will call you for each update. If your pet's condition changes, you will be notified immediately. Please ensure the best phone number to reach you is available in your pet's chart and please be available to take phone calls (this may be during the day or overnight) while your pet is in the hospital.

Many communications will be with the fourth-year veterinary student assigned to your pet's care. Each time a student calls, a veterinarian will have discussed the status of your pet with the student prior to the phone call. A surgical resident or faculty member will be available to speak with you at any point in your pet's care.

Discharge

- Patient discharge times are between 3 and 6 p.m., Monday to Friday; between 7:30 and 9 a.m. on Saturdays and Sundays.

In certain situations, if these times do not work with your schedule, we are able to review the discharge paperwork over the phone and then someone will be available to discharge your pet with its medications to you before 9 p.m.

No patients will be discharged from the soft tissue surgery service after 9 p.m.

Please note, if you elect to come outside the STS Service discharge hours, the technician discharging your pet will not be able to answer any questions at the time of pick-up, as they may not be part of the team that has been directly caring for your pet. If you have additional questions at this time, please call the STS Service after 9 a.m. the following morning to speak with the resident or attending faculty in charge of your pet's care.

- All discharge instructions will be automatically faxed to your family veterinarian at the time of discharge.

