

## Pre-operative Instructions

### What you need to know...

- **We work by appointment only.** We do not accept walk-ins. If you don't have an appointment, we cannot provide service. In order to request a spay/neuter appointment for your pet, please go online to <https://www.ral.org/spay-neuter-clinic> and navigate to the clinic's homepage. Scroll down until you see "Request an Appointment". Follow the prompts at that link. If you are unable to see any open appointments available for your pet type, then we are already booked for that animal type. Our system is on a rolling calendar, so it is encouraged to check back for additional open appointments in the future. Please keep in mind that our clinic focuses primarily on spay/neuter appointments for public and non-profit rescue organizations and shelters. Appointments for the public are very limited at this time. If you have any questions, please reach out to us at [clinic@ral.org](mailto:clinic@ral.org).
- **We only provide spay/neuter services and cannot perform general care for your pet.** We strongly recommend that you have a regular veterinarian for your pet before scheduling any surgery. All pets should be seen by a veterinarian annually for an exam and vaccinations. Additional services described on our Patient/Client Disclosure form can only be performed the day of surgery as approved by our veterinarians.
- **To have surgery, pets must be over eight weeks of age, a minimum of two pounds, and healthy.** The ideal age for sterilization surgery is five to seven months. Please consult your full-service veterinarian about the best age for your pet before scheduling. Additionally, if on examination your pet shows signs of illness (nasal discharge, coughing, sneezing, or diarrhea), signs of injury (bite wounds, deep cuts, hurt limbs), has a heart murmur, a history of seizures, or is overweight, they may be declined for surgery out of concern for the pet's safety.
- **Proof of vaccination for Rabies is required. It is strongly recommended that your pet be vaccinated at least two weeks before your appointment.** A copy of the paper certificate signed by the treating veterinarian is necessary for proof of vaccination. Tags are not sufficient proof. If your pet does not have a Rabies vaccine at the time of surgery or sufficient proof is not given, they will be vaccinated at cost to the owner. Other vaccines such as Distemper and Bordetella are encouraged for your pet's safety and can be requested at the time of surgery.
- **Your pet needs to be reasonably clean and on flea/tick prevention.** Pets will not be able to have a bath for a minimum of seven days after surgery. It is highly recommended to bathe your pet if necessary and give flea/tick prevention a day or two before your appointment. Any pets found to have evidence of fleas on examination will be given a fast-acting but short-term medication to kill adult fleas.

### The night before surgery...

- **Keep your pet inside.** This includes feral cats. Walk your dog on a leash the morning of surgery. This is necessary to prevent your pet from hunting or eating food without your knowledge.
- **Dogs over four months of age should not eat after midnight.** Water is okay until 6AM the day of surgery.
- **No food or water after 6AM.** All cats and puppies four months or younger can have food and water the night before and a light meal at 6AM the morning of surgery.

### Your spay/neuter appointment...

- **Check-in for all pets is at 8AM.** Your pet does not need to wait in line with you, particularly if your dog is animal reactive. Patients who arrive after 8:30 AM will not be accepted, and it will be the responsibility of the owner to reschedule the appointment.

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- **Dogs must arrive on a leash. Cats must be in secure, clean carriers lined with a towel. Ferrets must be in secure humane traps.** Cats must go home in individual carriers that are labeled with the owner's and pet's name. We prefer hard-sided carriers; soft or cloth-sided carriers can collapse on the pet. We will not keep dogs' leashes; dog owners should bring their pet's leash back for check-out or plan to have the person picking up bring a leash with them. We will not discharge pets without a leash, carrier, or humane trap.
- **We only accept exact cash or payment by card.** Full payment is required prior to picking up your pet. Once your pet's surgery is complete, we will send a payment link to your email to pay online. If you are unable to pay online, please let a staff member know as payment will need to be completed at patient discharge. We prefer card payments but we can accept exact cash payments as we cannot make change; donations are warmly encouraged. Pre-payment and deposits for appointments will not be accepted. We do not accept checks, Care Credit, or other pet insurance. We can take all major Debit and Credit cards.
- **Pick up is 4:00 PM. There will be a late fee if your pet is picked up after 4:30 pm.** We do not board pets. No overnight care or service is available. Any owner who does not pick-up by 4:30 PM will be charged a late fee of \$40. Chesterfield County Animal Services will be called to pick-up any pet not discharged by 5:30 PM. If your pet is anxious, you may be asked to pick up ahead of schedule. Please keep your phone on and nearby in anticipation of this or any other call from our clinic.

Your pet's health and well-being is the primary concern of our clinic. Our veterinarians perform a general physical examination on all patients prior to surgery and reserve the right to refuse service to any pet for whom surgery is deemed a health risk.

Reasons for refusal include, but are not limited to:

- Pets that are excessively overweight or obese.
- Pets that are brachycephalic (short-nosed) or have labored breathing for any reason.
- Illness, including pets under the current supervision of a veterinarian for chronic health issues and taking certain medications. Your full-service veterinarian may give surgical clearance, but our veterinarian on the day of surgery has the final right of refusal.
- Eating after 6AM. Pets who eat before surgery are at higher risk of aspiration and/or vomiting.
- Pet was left outside overnight. It isn't guaranteed that your pet hasn't eaten or gotten into a fight with another animal.
- Pets that cannot safely be handled and examined by our staff.
- Feral cats must be in humane traps for safety. Feral cats brought in carriers will have to be rescheduled.
- Pets younger than eight weeks or smaller than two pounds. Small-breed puppies are encouraged to delay surgery until six months of age.
- Pets that are nearing the end of gestation (pregnancy).
- Heart murmur. You may submit a cardiac work-up of your pet if one has been done for our vet to review.

**Please contact our staff at (804) 379-9725 before your appointment to discuss any of these issues if they apply to your pet. You may be asked to provide veterinary records or to reschedule your appointment until after a vet appointment.**