Thank you for helping Richmond’s community cats!

Your cat has been under general anesthesia for a surgical operation. It is critical that you do not immediately release your cat as it will probably be sleepy for the next two to twelve hours. Your cat was given an injectable pain medication that will last for 24-hours after surgery. Community cats are not sent home with oral pain medication and in general will recover well on their own.

There are no sutures that need to be removed. Unless otherwise noted, all sutures are dissolvable, and under your cat’s skin. If your cat was female, her incision was sealed with surgical glue. Male cats’ incisions do not require surgical glue and heal naturally. You can minimize the risk of infection by making sure the overnight space you provided for your cat is clean and free of any urine or fecal matter.

We do not send community cats home with cones (Elizabethan collar). If the cat you have trapped is social and you feel they would benefit from a cone, you are welcome to come purchase one. Never release a community cat that is wearing a cone to the outdoors.

- **When you get home, bring your cat to a quiet, warm area where they can rest.** Cover the trap with a blanket or towel to help your cat feel safe. You can drop a small amount of food into the trap once your cat has settled down. Too much food or excitement can cause your cat to vomit. Felines may seem bad-tempered or make very jerky movements after experiencing anesthesia. These symptoms should decrease and resolve within 24–48 hours.

- **Never open a trap with a cat in it unless you are ready to release the cat.** You may see some blood underneath the trap after surgery. This may come from the incision site, or from the cat injuring itself on the trap. Call us at (804) 379-9725 option 2 and leave a voicemail if you have any concerns.

- **The morning after surgery, check that your cat is alert and responsive before you bring the cat back to the location where you trapped it.** Early morning is the safest time to release a community cat. Always point the trap away from roads and heavily-trafficked areas before opening the trap door.

- **Never hold a cat in a trap for more than 48 hours.** You may choose to hold a community cat for more than a night for a variety of reasons, including inclement weather. If you do, you are encouraged to transfer the cat to a larger pen or kennel for its safety.

**This is normal.**
- Your pet may be tired or sedate for 24 hours.
- They may act differently, particularly cats.
- There may be slight swelling as the incision site.
- There may be slight bruising at the incision site.
- There may be a firm bump where the body is reacting to the internal sutures. This will disappear in 30-90 days as the sutures dissolve.

**This is NOT normal.**
- Lethargy (sleepiness) or depression that lasts more than 24 hours.
- Excessive swelling, which may be a result of too much activity – keep your pet calm.
- Blood, pus, or fluid leaking from the incision site, or the penis or vagina.
- Pain at the incision site.
- Vomiting, diarrhea, or difficulty urinating.
- Pale gums.
- Labored breathing (panting without physical activity).

If you notice any of these symptoms, call (804) 379-9725 option 2.