

Post-Operative Instructions (Community Cat)

1. All community cats should be housed overnight in their traps in a safe, indoor location for the night following surgery. However, if possible, keeping female cats for one extra day for a total of 48 hours. Certain circumstances may dictate a female needs to be retained for a longer period, as directed by your vet and/or community cat coordinator.
 2. If you are keeping the cat(s) overnight, keep them in the trap in which they were placed after surgery, and keep the back trap door locked at all times. The cat(s) must be kept indoors in a temperature-controlled area, and monitored for bleeding, difficulty breathing, lethargy or dullness, vomiting and appetite. Not all feral cats will eat overnight, due to stress. Place the trap in a quiet, well-ventilated, temperature-controlled area.
 3. Keep the trap covered with a sheet or light blanket during the recovery period (but not too heavy; you don't want the cat to get too hot!). Do not handle the cat or put your fingers in the trap. Community cats are not vicious, but they are scared of people, strange noises, and activity.
 4. When feeding the cat(s), place canned food on a plastic lid with a little water around it. The cat may not eat. Be careful when opening the carrier or trap so that the cat does not escape. Keep hand out of the trap, and always relock the trap door. If you have a double door trap, open the sliding back door a crack, and slide the food and water in. You can also pour food and water through the wire cage if there are already bowls inside the trap.
 5. Check in on the cat periodically. If it is bleeding, vomiting, having difficulty breathing, or not waking up, **call the veterinary office that performed the surgery.**
 6. The cat does not need to return to the veterinary for suture removal because dissolvable sutures were used.
 7. Make sure to release the cats at the same site they were trapped during a time when there is little traffic. Place the trap with one end uncovered and facing towards the direction they should travel, and let them orient for a few minutes. Unlock the back trap door and remove the door. Some cats will come right out quickly, and others will take a bit longer. Once the cat is out of the trap, put the door back on.
 8. Provide fresh food, water, and shelter (especially important in the winter months). The cats may disappear for a few hours or days, but they will return after they have calmed down.
-