

SESSION 3

COMPANION ANIMAL MEDICINE, PART 2: SURGERY

DESCRIPTION OF SESSION

This session provides participants with a continuation of the surgical skills learned in part 1 of the Companion Animal Medicine session.

CATEGORY

- Health
- Veterinary Medicine

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this session, participants will have a better understanding of:

- Presurgical patient screening
- Anesthesia
- Surgical prep
- A sample sterile surgical procedure or dental procedure
- Postoperative recovery and nursing
- Aftercare and home care
- Surgical ethics

SUPPLIES

- Access to a veterinary facility that performs general surgery and/or dental procedures
- Surgical caps and masks for each participant (Follow facility policy regarding surgical gowns.)
- Examples of the various medical records (blank forms) used in the facility (i.e., surgical/dental forms, anesthetic logs, laboratory forms, permission slips, home care instruction, etc.)

ADVISOR NOTE

Be aware that the observation of a live surgical procedure—with its associate blood, smells, and visual experiences—might not appeal to every participant. Be aware of and sensitive to any indications of uneasiness, sensitivity, sickness, fainting, etc., that may occur with your participants. Allow those participants who do not wish to participate in portions of this session to be excused until they are comfortable. Be sensitive to these participants' feelings, and at the same time be observant to prevent any peer mockery or harassment. Obtain permission from parents or guardians, if appropriate for your post.

Before Explorers enter a working environment, review the hazards and risks faced in veterinary medicine; the precautions that are taken to prevent injury, illness, and disease transmission to caregivers and other animals; and the use of appropriate controls. Explorers should be provided appropriate training and personal protective equipment (PPE) before entering the working environment. Please consider whether they may need to be excluded from certain procedures,

areas, or exams (e.g., X-rays or clinical laboratory procedures), and make appropriate safety accommodations. Due to the known hazards of ionizing radiation (X-rays), Explorers may not participate in the taking of radiographs. Trained laboratory technicians or their equivalent must be in immediate attendance whenever any clinical laboratory procedures are being carried out.

As you engage your post in activities each meeting, please include comments, discussions, and feedback to the group relating to **Character, Leadership** and **Ethics**. These are important attributes that make a difference in the success of youth in the workplace and in life.

ACTIVITIES

ACTIVITY 1

Speaker: Introduction to Companion Animal Surgery

Have the speaker (veterinarian) give an overview of the entire sequence of learning objectives:

- What is presurgical screening, and why it is important?
- How is the type of anesthesia selected and administered?
- What is surgical prep, and why is it important to both the patient and surgeon?
- Describe the current surgical procedure to be performed. Ovariohysterectomy (OVH), known as spaying, is the surgery of choice for Explorer-age participants to observe.
- Compare an OVH to other general surgeries performed on companion animals.
- Discuss postoperative recovery and nursing care of the patient.
- Discuss aftercare and home care instructions given to the pet owner.
- Discuss the removal of sutures, if necessary.
- Discuss animal population control concerns, surgery options to spay/neuter.
- Discuss myths vs. facts regarding pet reproduction.

ACTIVITY 2

Surgical Experience

Witness as many different surgeries as possible.

- Show videos related to presurgical procedures, OVHs, and postsurgical procedures and care. Select videos from a reputable online source or other resource. View videos in advance to make sure they are appropriate. [PetCARE TV](#) offers a number of [videos](#) you may find useful.
- Observe proper restraint of the patient during the administration of anesthetic.
- Have participants practice scrubbing up their hands (presurgical).
- Observe the surgery, recovery period, and postoperative care of the surgical patient.
- Observe the cleanup required after the surgical procedure.
- Discuss the various record-keeping requirements for animal surgical patients and why maintaining these sorts of records is important.
- Discuss the entire surgical experience.

ACTIVITY 3

Dental Care

- Show videos related to presurgical procedures, dental cleaning procedures, and postsurgical procedures and care. Select videos from a reputable online source or other resource. View videos in advance to make sure they are appropriate.
- Observe proper restraint of the patient during the administration of anesthetic.
- Observe the dental procedure, recovery period, and postoperative care of the dental surgery patient.
- Observe the cleanup required after the dental surgery procedure.
- Discuss the various record-keeping requirements for animal surgical patients and why maintaining these sorts of records is important.
- Learn about home care and daily brushing of an animal's teeth.
- Discuss the entire dental experience.

ACTIVITY 4

- Brush a dog's teeth. Practice the proper procedure demonstrated in the previous session.

ADVISOR NOTE

Some sample questions are below. They are designed to help the participants apply what they have learned to their own interests. You are welcome to use these questions or develop your own questions that relate to your post or specific area of focus.

REFLECTION

- *Which aspects of the companion animal surgery session interested you the most?*
 - *What ethical responsibilities do the veterinarian and staff have to their patient?*
 - *What did you learn during this session about the complexity of animal surgery and/or dental procedures?*
 - *How does a companion animal veterinarian decide when a surgical procedure is warranted? Are there any ethical aspects to this type of decision-making process?*
 - *What can you do now, during your time as a student, to prepare yourself for a career in veterinary medicine? Why is this topic important?*
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