
SEDATION IN DOGS, CATS AND FERRETS

What is sedation?

A sedative will allow your pet to relax and be unaware of moderate discomfort. We cannot ask our pets to stay still for a minor procedure, unlike with people. We often give sedatives to pets undergoing imaging, so they are not worried and are relaxed enough to stay in the right position, or to pets undergoing minor investigations such as examining or flushing wounds or changing a dressing.

Pets that are sedated are in a sleepy state both mentally and physically, and are unlikely to remember what has happened once they wake up.

What are the risks of sedation?

The vast majority of pets that are sedated do not encounter any problems during or after their procedure. Occasionally they may develop a tummy upset after the procedure, which can be as a result of the body processing the sedative drugs. This usually resolves within a day or two, if it happens. Very rarely, a pet can have a more serious and unexpected reaction to a sedative, such as a drop in heart rate, or difficulty breathing, and even more rarely, this can be fatal. All pets undergoing sedation at our practice are assessed before their procedure, and their medications are individually tailored to them to minimise the risk of an adverse reaction. All pets are monitored during sedation and recovery by fully trained staff until they are awake again, and we have emergency drugs and equipment on hand in case anything unexpected happens.

How can I look after my pet after he/she has been sedated?

Your pet may be a little drowsy when he/she gets home. It's best to feed a small meal of bland food when they get home, and to provide a calm, quiet space. Dogs can be taken for a brief walk to go to the toilet, and cats should be kept indoors with a litter tray until the following day so they don't get into trouble whilst still feeling sleepy.

J Peace 2018