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## QUALITY OF CARE SURGICAL CHECKLIST

Have you ever wondered why there is sometimes a difference in the cost of care between veterinary clinics or surgical facilities? Though it will be outside the scope of a one-page article to address all of the reasons, I hope to address many of them and to help you compare veterinary practices based on an "apples to apples" line of reasoning instead of trying to compare "apples to oranges".

I would like to provide you with a Spay/Neuter/Declaw/Surgery/Dental Question Checklist that you can use to help assure that your pet will have the **safest, most comfortable, stress-free** experience possible. *Do not be afraid to ask these questions - they are important!* A good veterinarian will welcome them and will know that you are an educated, concerned pet parent! The choice of **any** health care professional needs to be based on the **quality of care** received. The incredible importance of this choice is most critical when deciding who will be performing a **surgical or anesthetic procedure** on your beloved family pet.

- Is the **facility** clean, odor-free and well-maintained? Am I able to take a **tour** of the surgical and recovery areas?
- Will your pet's **blood work** be checked pre-operatively to make certain their liver and kidneys are functioning normally and able to withstand anesthetic? Is this included in the estimate?
- Will your pet receive **unnecessary** post-operative antibiotics for a spay, neuter or declaw? Performed **properly**, these surgeries should almost never be associated with post-operative infections.
- What types** of pain medications and anesthetics are being used and why? Butorphanol is not effective pain relief whereas buprenorphine is. **Declawing** is an extremely painful procedure when appropriate, **multimodal** pain medications are not used. Multimodal techniques treat pain using different pathways.
- Are **IV fluids** included in the estimate? Will a fluid pump be used so the dose is accurate?
- Is the **staff** friendly, knowledgeable and willing to answer all of your questions?
- Will a **technician** be **actively monitoring** your pet's **vital signs** (Pulse, Respiration, Temperature, Anesthetic, Pain Levels) during surgery, and be **directly present** by your pet's side when waking up?
- Will your pet be kept **warm** before, during and after surgery? Temperature checked?
- Will individual use **sterile/autoclaved** instruments, gowns, gloves, suture packs (not reels) be used?
- What type of **monitoring equipment** (*in addition* to a technician physically monitoring) will be used to ensure my pet's **safety**? Pulse Oximeter, Heart rate monitor, ECG?
- Does the veterinary surgeon understand that **pets feel pain** in the **same** way that people do, but do not **show** signs of pain in the same way? Are they using up-to-date, multimodal anesthesia and pain relief?
- Will your pet be **intubated** (tube placed in the windpipe) to ensure their ability to breathe during surgery?
- How much **continuing education** do the veterinarians and staff engage in? Is it as important to them as it is to you that your pet receive the **safest, most effective anesthetic and pain relief** protocols?