



Frequently Asked Questions Anesthesia at AERA

I'm worried about anesthesia. Is it really safe?

Yes, anesthesia is extremely safe for most pets. Using anesthesia in veterinary medical procedures has saved the lives of many furry family members! As with any medical procedure, complications can sometimes occur. Careful assessment and planning, along with a trained and experienced anesthesia team that continuously monitors your pet, are essential to minimizing complications. At AERA, we offer all of the above! Our goal is to do everything we can to keep your pet safe and pain-free at all times.

Are there alternatives to general anesthesia?

Sometimes a small procedure can be completed with sedation and/or local anesthesia (numbing of the pain site). However, dogs and cats do not always cooperate with this option and general anesthesia is often necessary for a procedure to be completed in a safe and stress-free manner. More complicated procedures definitely require the use of general anesthesia, as it is the safest and most comfortable option for pets.

How is my pet monitored during anesthesia?

Every pet undergoing anesthesia has a veterinary team working with them: the primary doctor performing the procedure and one or two highly skilled veterinary nurses who constantly monitor your pet throughout the procedure and into the post-operative period. In addition to continuous clinical attention, a variety of advanced and state-of-the-art equipment will be used to monitor your pet's vital signs. We truly believe that our beloved pet patients deserve the same quality medical care as their owners do. This is why much of our equipment is the same as what is used during human anesthesia. We strive to offer an experience for your pet that is as similar as possible to a human hospital.

When I was in the hospital there was an anesthesiologist. Is there such a thing for animals?

As a matter of fact there is! There are not many anesthesiologists in private practice, but one of the many ways that AERA raises the bar for veterinary medicine is by having a full-time veterinary anesthesiologist on staff. This is part of what makes us so unique!

Who is the anesthesiologist at AERA and what does she do?

Dr. Lydia Love is one of only a few board-certified veterinary anesthesiologists in private practice in the United States. Dr. Love will ensure that the highest standard of veterinary anesthetic care is applied to every procedure, your pet is treated gently and with respect, and every possible avenue of pain management is provided.

She is responsible for the education and training of the veterinary nurses that perform anesthesia at AERA. Dr. Love works closely with the veterinary nurses and veterinarians at AERA to assess your pet's health status, develop a comprehensive anesthetic protocol, and provide continuous vital sign monitoring and supportive care throughout anesthesia. Her care and dedication allows us to offer specialized anesthetic care for all pets, including those with complicating factors such as serious heart, kidney, lung, and liver disease.

How does someone become a veterinary anesthesiologist?

Veterinary anesthesiologists are board-certified specialists. After completing their undergraduate education, they move on to a four-year veterinary program. Once they receive their doctorate in veterinary medicine, they then pursue additional training. They must complete another four years of post-



graduate instruction (internship and residency programs) as well as pass several board certification examinations. The American College of Veterinary Anesthesia and Analgesia maintains standards for and certifies veterinarians in the practice of sedation and anesthesia for all species of animals.

Is it possible to arrange for Dr. Love to handle the anesthesia herself? Can I meet with or talk to her?

Yes, Dr. Love is available to speak with you about your concerns and directly manage your pet's anesthetic event if necessary. This can all be arranged when appropriate by discussing options with your pet's primary veterinarian or a doctor at AERA.

Do I have to do anything special to prepare my pet for anesthesia?

Most animals are fasted for 6-12 hours before anesthesia, though there are some exceptions. Don't worry - this is perfectly safe and allows for accurate testing and a successful anesthetic event. Usually, free access to water is fine until leaving the house. You will be provided with more detailed and personalized instructions prior to the procedure.

Will my pet be in pain during and after the procedure?

We use general anesthesia for our patients to spare them pain and discomfort during difficult periods. During anesthesia, your pet will not be aware of any discomfort (he or she will be too busy snoozing!). After recovery, a variety of medications will be used to ensure that your pet is as comfortable as possible.

What happens after my pet wakes up from his/her procedure?

Once the procedure is complete, your pet will be recovered from anesthesia and frequently assessed for comfort. Medications and fluids will be administered as needed to keep your pet safe and comfortable. Your pet will have a friend (nurse) nearby as he or she awakens.

When can my pet come home?

Some pets can be discharged on the same day once they are nice and steady on their paws. If your pet comes home on the day of their procedure, he or she may be a bit tired or quiet and may not be hungry right away. This is perfectly normal! Generally, healthy animals are back to their regular routines by the next day or shortly thereafter. Pets with more involved procedures may need to stay in the hospital for a few days to recuperate comfortably after surgery. This is to ensure the fastest and safest possible recovery period for your pet.

Can you tell me a little more about Dr. Lydia Love?

After graduating from the University of Tennessee's College of Veterinary Medicine in 2002 and completing a rotating small animal internship in San Diego in 2003, Dr. Love worked for The Humane Society of the United States as Director of Appalachian Services. Here, Dr. Love conducted free spay & neuter clinics in underserved communities in the Southeast. This work caused Dr. Love to develop a passionate interest in anesthesia, pain management, and comprehensive peri-operative care, which inspired her return to the University of Tennessee in 2007 to complete a residency in veterinary anesthesia. She obtained board certification from the American College of Veterinary Anesthesia and Analgesia in 2010 and with an eye towards sharing her enthusiasm and concern for high quality anesthetic care for companion animals, Dr. Love joined AERA in September of 2010. Dr. Love enjoys spending time with her family (human and furry!), knitting, crafts of all kinds, and running.

