



General anaesthetics and standing sedation

Before you bring your horse into the hospital

- **Admission**- we generally ask for horses to be brought in the day before surgery. You will be advised regarding the needs of your individual horse. We ask this to allow plenty of time for pre-anaesthetic checks and to prepare your horse for his/ her anaesthetic. It also reduces anaesthetic risk as your horse will be more settled as it allows a period of relaxation after travel etc.
- **Shoes**- shoes need to be removed prior to surgery if a general anaesthetic is to be administered. If the surgery is to be performed under sedation, shoes can be left on. This is to prevent damage to the padded recovery room and your horse. If you cannot arrange the farrier to take off your horses shoes prior to admission, it will be carried out at the hospital, at additional cost.
- **Cleanliness**- bringing your horse in relatively free from mud will help reduce potential contamination and help reduce grooming time prior to surgery. It also gives you the chance to check for any cuts, grazes or sore areas which may interfere with the surgical site- see below.
- **Legs**- if your horse is due to have surgery on his/ her lower legs and is showing any signs of mud fever or scabs, please phone the hospital for advice. We sometimes need to delay surgery to allow the skin to heal and to minimise the chance of infection of the surgical wound.
- **Insurance**- if your horse is insured, please contact the insurance company to inform them that your horse is due to have elective (planned) surgery and remember to bring in your insurance details when you drop your horse off. All insurance companies request to be informed prior to non-emergency surgery and we request that we get notice if we are to contact them to allow things to run smoothly.

What to bring

- **Headcollar, rope (and bridle/ chifney if required)**
- **Passport**- we legally need to check a horse's passport before he / she is discharged from the hospital due to certain drugs which your horse will have received during their stay. The administration of some drugs means that your horse has to be declared as never being intended for human consumption.
- **Rugs**- please feel free to bring any rugs your horse usually wears for him / her to wear during their stay at the hospital. The barn is usually cosy, so don't worry if they don't usually wear rugs- we have spare rugs to put on immediately after surgery until they can maintain their temperature normally.
- **Feed**- we tailor feed to every individual. We have many types of feed at the hospital, but if you wish your horse to be fed speciality feeds, feel free to bring them with him/ her in a clearly labelled container.
- **Medication**- please bring any medication / supplements your horse usually has and inform the nurses of instructions when he / she is admitted.

What to expect

- Your vet should already have discussed the type of surgery prior to admission- if you have any questions, please feel free to ask.
- Length of stay at the hospital will depend on the type of surgery but most stay with us for at least a couple of days after surgery- this is allow us to keep a close check on surgical



wounds and to administer drugs as needed. As soon as we are happy your horse can be cared for at home, they can be discharged. Some people prefer their horse to stay with us for a couple of extra days, for example due to travel limitations or if your horse is difficult to give medication to, this is fine- just tell the vet when you speak to them.

- We usually reduce horses' feed overnight before a general anaesthetic is given. They are allowed free access to water and they generally get a small breakfast the morning of surgery so they don't get stressed and feel left out while the other inpatients are being fed!
- General anaesthetics are major procedures and carry inherent risk. Horses are at greater risk of complications than other domestic animals- risks will be fully discussed prior to admission. We perform very thorough checks on all patients prior to anaesthesia- if we find anything that may put your horse at increased risk of problems, you will be informed and options fully discussed prior to surgery- again, if you have any questions please feel free to ask.
- When the surgery is finished, you will be contacted to let you know how surgery has gone. If your horse has had a general anaesthetic you will then be contacted again when your horse is back on his/ her feet, safe and sound.
- We generally ask people not to visit their horse on the same day as their surgery. Horse's are profoundly sedated after surgery and it is important they are allowed time to rest and recover from the anaesthetic. It can be upsetting for both the horse and owner and they will get lots of TLC from the team at the hospital.
- Horses will have multiple close clip patches where intra-venous catheters are placed and for anaesthetic monitoring, as well as a large clip at the surgical site.
- You will be kept up to date on your horse's progress from your vet and the hospital team, with a progress report every morning and as needed.
- Cost will usually have already been discussed prior to arranging surgery. If you have any queries please speak to your vet.

Discharge and after care

- You will get a rough time-scale of how long your horse will be with us to allow you to arrange transport etc.
- All horses will get discharged with specific directions and advice regarding medication, box rest, exercise, feeding and general aftercare. These will be fully discussed when you pick up your horse- it is important these are strictly followed to allow the best possible outcome for your horse following surgery. If you are unsure of anything or if you have questions when you get home, please phone the hospital.
- Many people worry about bringing their horse home and onto box rest- most horses are already in a routine by the time they get home, and are surprisingly settled. We have advice sheets with some helpful hints and tips- just ask at reception.