

After Surgery Instructions for Community Cats (TNR)

1. Keep the cat indoors for recovery overnight.

Keep community cats indoors overnight for recovery from surgery. Before release, cats should be awake and alert – eyes wide open and moving around on their own. Keep the cat in a locked trap and place the trap indoors in a temperature-controlled area. If the trap is on a cold floor (for example, a garage) place a few layers of newspaper or a sheet under the trap to provide insulation. The trap should be loosely covered with a light sheet or blanket. Keep recovering cats in a quiet and dark area to minimize stress.

2. Monitor for complications.

Monitor for bleeding, difficulty breathing, lethargy, or failure to stay awake. Not all community cats will eat after surgery due to the stress of confinement.

A small amount of bleeding from the ear tip or from the scrotum of a male cat can be normal. Bleeding that does not stop is not normal.

3. Offer food and water once awake.

If the cat is alert and you can safely confine the cat to one side of the trap using a trap divider, provide a small amount of canned food. Water is not necessary if the cat is eating canned food and is more likely to spill and cause wet bedding. Cats should be offered canned food twice daily while confined in the trap or cage prior to release.

4. Do not handle the cat.

Do not enter the trap of a community cat without confining the cat using a trap divider. Community cats can be very fearful around humans and may escape and cause injury to themselves or others.

5. Release the cat where it was found.

Make sure to release the cats at the same site they were trapped. This is the cat's home. Place the trap with one end uncovered and facing toward the direction where it is safe for them to run. Do not reach into the trap to release the cat even if the cat is slow to exit the trap.

Reasonable times for the cats to be returned are as follows:

- Healthy male cats: 24-48 hours following surgery
- Healthy female cats: 48-72 hours following surgery
- Lactating female cat who is recovering well: 24 hours following surgery

Confinement may be extremely stressful for free-roaming cats, so if the cat shows signs of extreme stress (repeated attempts to escape the trap), it should be released immediately. Confinement for periods longer than listed above (for either treatment of medical conditions or attempts at socialization) is not recommended as this is a welfare concern for community cats.



6. Additional Services

Community cats who are sterilized through Toronto Humane Society's Trap-Neuter-Return program receive the following treatments:

- Spay or neuter surgery with pain medication
- Rabies vaccine
- FVRCP vaccine
- Parasite treatment for fleas, ear mites, and worms
- Ear tip and surgical tattoo (to indicate sterilization)
- Microchip (registered to Toronto Humane Society)

In Case of Complications

Direct surgical complications will be evaluated and treated by Toronto Humane Society Public Veterinary Services. As handling of community cats can be stressful for the cats and unsafe for staff, evaluation and treatment of complications will be performed under sedation. Please present the cat in a secure trap if returning to the clinic for a post-operative evaluation. Whether a concern warrants a sedated exam will be at the discretion of the veterinarian. Concerns that are not directly related to surgery or are a worsening of pre-existing health condition are not eligible for post-operative rechecks.

If you have concerns with the cat's recovery, please email

csa@torontohumanesociety.com or call us at 416-392-2273 ext. 2250. If you are sent to our voicemail, please leave a detailed message and somebody will call you back as soon as possible. We are open from 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM from Monday to Friday. Please see our website for any additional closure updates.

If you have an urgent or emergency concern outside of our clinic hours, you will need to contact your local veterinarian or emergency clinic. If you take the cat to an emergency clinic or to another veterinarian for treatment, the cost will not be refunded by Toronto Humane Society Public Veterinary Services. We recommend calling ahead, as not all clinics or hospitals are equipped to handle community cats in traps.

