

SOS of Ohio | Feral Cat Post Surgery Care



1. After surgery, allow the cat to recover overnight in the same covered trap. Keep the cats indoors in their covered traps and make sure they are dry, in a temperature-controlled environment above 60 degrees, and **away from loud noises** or dangers such as toxic fumes, other animals, or people. When the cats are recovering from anesthesia **they are unable to regulate their body temperature**. It is important that the recovery location is temperature-controlled to keep the cats from getting too hot or too cold. A basement or bathroom will usually do the trick.
2. Put your safety first. Keep the traps covered to reduce the cats' stress. Never open the trap doors or allow the cats out of the trap. *Do not stick your fingers through the bars or attempt to handle the cats.*
3. Monitor the cats. Check the cats throughout the evening. If a cat is vomiting, bleeding, having difficulty breathing, or not waking up, call the emergency line at 740-817-2725.
4. Feed and provide the cats with water after they regain consciousness. When feeding the cats, lift the back door of the trap very slowly and allow only a small gap (one-half to one inch at most) to open. Slide a plastic lid with a little bit of food on it through the gap without putting your hand inside the trap. Do not offer food or water until the cats are completely awake.
5. Hold cats until they recover. Cats can be returned to the trapping site 12 to 24 hours following surgery, as long as they are fully awake and do not require further medical attention. You should return nursing mothers as soon as possible, once they completely regain consciousness so they can get back to their kittens. Make sure all cats are fully conscious, clear-eyed, and alert before releasing. We strongly recommend releasing feral cats the day after surgery, but if there is a reason that the cats are being held longer than 24 hours, the newspaper in the trap will need to be changed twice daily and fresh food and water provided until release.
6. Return the cats. Release the cat in the same place you trapped him or her. Open the front door of the trap and pull back the cover. Or, if the trap has a rear door, pull the cover away from the back door, pull that door up and off, then completely remove the cover and walk away.
7. Thoroughly clean the traps with a nontoxic disinfectant when the returning is complete. Whether the traps are borrowed or your own, they should be cleaned before they are stored. Even traps that appear clean must be disinfected - the scent of the cat previously trapped may deter other cats from entering.
8. Relocation of the cats should only be done as a last resort. Relocation of cats should be done only under extreme circumstances when the cats' lives are in eminent danger. In that case, be fully prepared by reading the Guidelines for Safe Relocation of Feral Cats on Alley Cat Allies website at www.alleycat.org.