

Sedation Vs. General Anesthesia



LITTLE CREEK
VETERINARY CLINIC

Both reduce or diminish the response to painful stimulus.
Both can be referred to as “anesthesia”.

SO WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE?

SEDATION

- Use of a drug via an intramuscular or intravenous injection to relax the muscles and reduce response to painful stimulus
- Often does not require an endotracheal tube placed
- Relaxation and loss of muscle control
- Can be used in conjunction with a local anesthetic to provide additional pain relief
- Reduce response to stimuli

GENERAL ANESTHESIA

- Following pre-medication with a sedative and often an opiate, an induction agent is given to completely anesthetize your pet
- Stabilization of the airway with an endotracheal tube to deliver fresh oxygen and inhalant anesthetic to your pet
- Complete loss of all consciousness
- Complete loss of pain sensation
- Used in longer duration procedures

HOW DO WE DETERMINE WHICH TO USE?

There are many factors that go into determining what drugs we use for sedation or pre-medication and what level of anesthesia is required to perform the required procedure:

- Duration of procedure – a shorter procedure may not require a general anesthetic
- Invasiveness of the procedure – the more invasive, the deeper level of sedation required
- Any pre-existing conditions – kidney, liver or heart disease will affect your veterinarians’ decision on a drug protocol. Each patient has a tailored protocol in attempts to maintain a high level of safety when anesthetizing your pet

REDUCING THE RISK

Your pet is required to have a presurgical appointment before surgery. At this appointment, your veterinarian will do a full physical examination and likely recommend a blood panel to assess kidney and liver function. This information is vital in helping to assess your pet’s overall health and eligibility to undergo an anesthetic procedure.

