



Feral Cat Recovery Protocol

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Your feral friend has undergone general anesthesia and major surgery today. Since she is not a handleable creature, it is critical to observe these instructions to ensure her successful recovery.

DO NOT release the cat or even open the trap until she is completely normal. This means:

- No longer bobbing her head
- No longer weaving back and forth
- Stable and standing on all four feet
- She can make and keep direct eye contact with you
- Her pupils are no longer dilated—that they contract when you shine a flashlight in her eyes

Why? When a feral cat sees an opportunity to escape, she will bolt. If this were to happen before she is fully recovered, she could not avoid an oncoming car or escape from a dog. If she managed to climb, she would fall and be unable to right herself before hitting the ground.

Why? The anesthesia we use is injectable; it is long-lasting and affords us ample time to thoroughly examine and address all the health issues that feral cats frequently have. Unlike inhalant (breathable) anesthesia, injectable drugs do not wear off immediately; they must be metabolized by the body. Recovery may take as little as 1 hour or as long as 24 hours. Each patient is different; there is no way to determine a recovery time except by waiting and observation.

Keep your feral friend in the trap overnight; release her during the heat of the day the next morning.

- Keep the carrier indoors in a warm, dark, quiet place.
- Keep the carrier off the floor and out of drafts.
- Keep the carrier covered to hold in body heat and make her feel secure.

Why? Her abdomen was shaved to perform surgery; she will not have a full hair coat to protect her from the cold until it grows back several weeks from now. She will need the heat of the day to find a warm place for herself.

DO NOT offer food or water until she is completely normal. If she eats before she is fully recovered, she could vomit and choke; if she falls face first into the water, she could drown.

Thank you for caring about our feral feline friends!