

# POST-SURGERY RECOVERY CARE FOR FERAL CATS



**THE LEFT EAR TIP**  
identifies a community  
cat that has been fixed  
and vaccinated!

Cats typically will recover from the anesthesia used for their surgery within 24 hours. Cats can be returned to their territory if they are fully recovered with coordinated mobility. Some cats may require additional time to allow the anesthesia to wear off fully. If a cat is still wobbly or does not appear to be fully coordinated, it would be best to hold onto the cat for an additional 12-24 hours before returning them back to their colony.

- Feed the cat once or twice a day during the holding period.
- Never relocate an animal as it will become disoriented and can die.
- Keep the trap covered until you are ready to release. When ready, simply hold the trap with the door facing away from you and open the door. Never put your hand in the trap. If the cat will not leave, prop open the door with a stick and leave it for a bit.
- Do not let the cat loose in your house or attempt to transfer her to another cage. Transferring is difficult and if the cat gets loose, you cannot properly monitor her recovery.
- If needed, prepare the holding area ahead of time. A garage, extra room, bathroom, bathtub, basement, or laundry room can work well. The area should be quiet, sheltered, and off-limits to any other animals. It must also be warm and dry.
- Prop the trap up on bricks, chairs or anything to raise it off the floor a few inches. Make sure it is stable and sturdy.
- Underneath the trap, place a piece of plastic (shower curtain or large trash bags) topped with newspaper. This will absorb any urine or spilled water. There may be a few drops of blood on the paper in the bottom of the cage, but this is normal.
- When you get home, place the covered trap in the recovery area and leave the cat alone for a little while.
- That evening, offer the cat food. Open the trap door one to two inches and slip in a couple of small plastic or paper dishes. You can refill them with dry food and water from outside the trap.
- Make sure both trap doors are securely shut and latched. The cat will usually move to the end of the trap away from you, but always be cautious when opening the trap door. If necessary, dishes can be moved around with blunt sticks. Do not use anything sharp that could injure the cat.
- Before releasing the cat, try to check the incision to make sure it is closed and dry.