

Papillon Club of America Health & Genetics



ANESTHESIA IN THE PAPILLON AND OTHER TOY DOGS

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(revised 10/18/09)

This article is intended to offer some useful, thought-provoking information about anesthesia.

By definition the word anesthesia means without pain. There are many ways to produce this state in our dogs. The method used is governed by the type of procedure to be performed. The basic types in veterinary medicine are local, epidural, and the most common is general.

I have heard many Papillon breeders say that Paps are more susceptible to anesthesia than other dogs. This, in my opinion, is just not so. Papillons are no different or no more susceptible than any other dog to the effects of general anesthesia. The most important thing in treating toy dogs is to have an accurate weight on the dog. Anesthetics have a dose which is based on weight, so it is critical to get an accurate weight just prior to administering anesthesia. Anesthetics are generally administered to effect, but the calculated dose is very important for the starting point.

With the advent of newer anesthetics and combinations, much of the risk has been removed. Some of the more commonly used drugs today are Ketamine, Torbutrol, Propofol, Xylazine, Domitor and Antisedan. These drugs either alone or in combination have helped to improve the anesthetic event with smooth induction and recovery. Each patient and procedure to be performed will dictate what anesthesia protocol will be employed.

All veterinarians have their own particular favorite protocols which they base on experience and safety and you should have the confidence in your veterinarian to trust their judgment. That is not to say that you should not discuss your concerns and have them satisfied. When calling to schedule an appointment involving anesthesia it would be wise to obtain answers to a few questions. It would be helpful to know if the practice treats many toy dogs. You should also ask what type of anesthesia is planned, and if it is gas, which one. The two main gas anesthetics used today are Isoflurane and Sevoflurane. They are both very safe and have a very high rate of success. You should also inform the hospital of any particular problems your dog may have, such as a heart condition, old age, or previous problems with anesthesia. I would also ask if the hospital generally gives injections or vaccinations to the animal while still asleep. If so, you may want to request that they wait until the animal is awake. The reason for this is in case the dog had a reaction to the injection you would not know it if the animal were sleeping. Make sure all your questions are answered satisfactorily, because under the best of circumstances complications can still arise. Your dog could have an unknown allergic reaction, or cardiac arrest, or respiratory arrest could occur.

No article about anesthesia today would be complete without writing about pain management. Some of the more common pain medications are morphine, fentanyl, hydromorphone, buprenex, Rimadyl, Deramamx, Previcox, Metacam and Tramadol. Pain medication is often administered prior to surgery to get ahead of the pain. During long procedures they are sometimes used during the procedure. Most procedures are given post op pain medication to ease the recovery and lead to a more successful outcome for the patient.

In conclusion, I believe that with the newer technologies available to the veterinary profession today, the risk of general anesthesia is minimal and should not be avoided if it is in the best interest of your dog

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