

*Intensive care is only accomplished through the efforts of many people working together.*

*We want you to be an active participant in this effort.*

*We will provide you with as much information as we can, and help you to work through the many decisions that must be made along the way.*

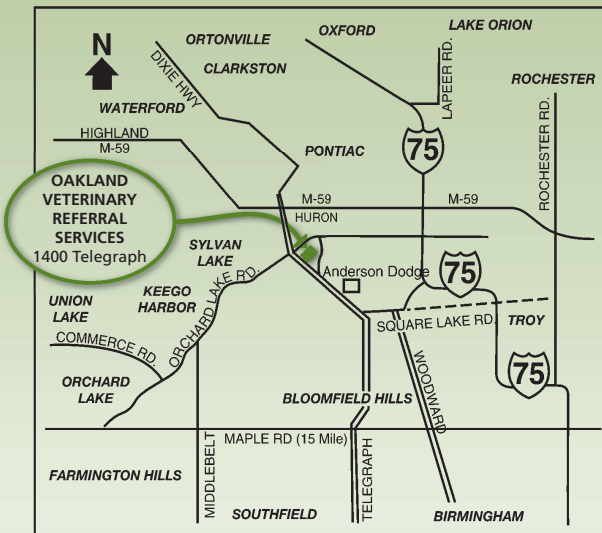
*Thank you for placing your pet's life in our hands. We promise to honor your trust.*



Specialty veterinary medicine is a relatively new advancement in pet care. Similar to specialists in human medicine, board-certified veterinary specialists focus their education and services in one specific area.

Have you been referred?  
 Things to bring at the time of your consultation:

- Recent radiographs and blood work
- Medications your pet is being given



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## Oakland Veterinary Referral Services



## Intensive Care Unit

Issues & Answers

## How Will My Pet Look?

Your pet may have multiple tubes and lines in place when he or she is in the ICU. There are many variations of the types of tubes and monitors required. Your pet may have some, none, or all of the following listed. Most of these devices are temporary and will be removed when they are no longer needed. Please do not hesitate to ask your pet's doctor or technician if you have any questions or concerns.

### The Tubes...

- **Heart Monitor Leads:** Sticky pads that are placed on the sides of the patient in order to monitor the electrical activity of the heart.
- **Pulse Oximeter:** A small probe attached to the tongue, lip, ear, or one of several other small places that helps monitor the oxygen in the blood and the animal's pulse.
- **Urinary Catheter:** A catheter inserted into the bladder to drain urine into a bag.
- **Intravenous (IV) Catheter:** A small catheter placed into a vein, which is used to administer fluids or medications.
- **Blood Pressure Cuff:** A cuff placed on the leg, which may be inflated so that the amount of pressure in the arteries can be evaluated.
- **Arterial Line:** A small catheter that is inserted into the artery to monitor blood oxygen content or continuously monitor the blood pressure.
- **Central Line Catheter:** A catheter for fluid administration that is placed in a neck or groin vein. This line can also be used to help monitor your pet's fluid therapy. Some of these catheters may also be used for administering nutrition and other medications.
- **Tracheostomy Tube:** A breathing tube inserted in the neck usually when assisted breathing is needed over a long period of time.
- **Nasal Catheter:** A small flexible catheter that is inserted into the sinus to continuously provide oxygen.

- **Nasogastric Tube:** A small flexible catheter that is inserted into the nose and extends into the stomach for temporary feeding.
- **Gastrostomy Tube:** A large tube surgically placed through the abdominal wall for feeding purposes. When the tube is placed with an endoscope, it may also be referred to as a percutaneous endoscopic gastrostomy (PEG) tube. This tube is larger than a normal catheter and provides direct access to the stomach to allow for long-term feeding and administration of medications.

- **Chest Tube:** A larger tube inserted between the skin on the chest and the lungs. This tube removes free air or fluid that may make it difficult for the patient to breathe.



### Why Does My Pet Look That Way?

Intensive care patients require a large number of blood tests. Even when the lab tests are drawn correctly, bruising may occur. Many critical illnesses make an animal prone to bruising, and bruising may occur because the illness makes it difficult for blood to clot. Animals with liver problems, infections, or poor nutrition bruise easily. Older animals and animals that have been on blood thinners are at high risk for bruising.

Sometimes the restriction of movement, the critical illness, and the intravenous fluids may cause swelling or edema. There is little that can be done to prevent the swelling. However, it will gradually go away as the patient's condition improves.

Occasionally, patients must wear an Elizabethan collar (also known as an E-collar, cone, lamp-shade, etc.) to prevent them from removing their IV lines, catheters, and bandages, or to prevent them from licking their wounds. The E-collar does not hurt your pet, and in some cases will

help calm them down. Rest assured that your pet can still eat and drink while wearing the E-collar.

Since animals tend to move around in their cages, measures must be taken to ensure IV lines do not get stepped on and pulled out. The colored bandages on the legs of your pet help to protect the catheter.

In some cases the animals are not always able to control their bowels. At times diarrhea may leak out constantly, necessitating frequent clean-ups. When this occurs, the longer hair may be clipped to prevent skin rashes, or the tail may be wrapped to help keep it clean.

### Why Does My Pet Act That Way?

Many patients tend to get restless after being in the ICU for several days. We work hard to reduce your pet's anxiety level, mostly with a lot of calm, reassuring talk and gentle touching. Sedatives may occasionally be used to reduce anxiety. Sedatives relax and calm the patient, usually causing them to sleep. If your pet is on a ventilator for assistance with breathing, sedatives will probably be given to make breathing easier.

Pain is managed by giving analgesic medications. Our ICU doctors and staff are well trained to recognize pain in animals, and will treat it as necessary.

Sometimes your pet may act in ways that surprise or distress you. Hospitalized pets may do things that they would not ordinarily do, or may seem quiet and withdrawn. These behaviors may be caused by the medications, the illness, or a combination of factors. It is important that you relay to the ICU staff the differences that you notice, so a decision can be made about whether the medicine should be changed, or if the behavior is unrelated to medication.

