



Post-operative Pain Assessment

- Avoiding pain is beneficial; it enables patient comfort, minimises stress, and reduces recovery times.
- Assessing pain levels ensures that sufficient levels of analgesia are given.
- Assess pain and wound healing daily at the same time.
- Adequate analgesia minimises the risk of infection from licking the wound.
- Use the following protocol; aim for a score 0 or 1.
- Scores of 2 and above require additional analgesia.

Pain level	Clinical signs often associated with degree of pain
0 - No pain	Bright, eating, sleeping comfortable, grooming, affectionate
1 - Mild discomfort	Eats, sleeps, resists surgical palpation, not depressed
2 - Mild	Picks at food, guards surgical area, slightly depressed
3 - Mild to moderate	Inappetant, guards/looks/licks/chews surgical area, unrelaxed, whimpers
4 - Moderate	Depressed, reluctant to move, aggressive, may vocalise, mydriasis
5 - Increased moderate	As score 4, but more pronounced
6 - Moderate to severe	Very depressed, will not move even to urinate, vocalises often
7 - Severe	Motionless, extremely depressed, vocalises
8 - Increased severe	As 8, hyperalgesic wherever touched, trembling, will die from pain
9 - Excruciating	Piercing screams, nearly comatose, patient will die from pain

(Modified from Mathews KA. Pain assessment and general approach to management. Vet.Clin. North Am. - Small Anim. Pract. Elsevier Inc.; 2000;30:729-55)

