



Elizabethan collars, e-collars or cones, are an extremely important tool in ensuring your pet's successful recovery after spay or neuter. Cones should remain on your pet for 14 days. Our medical staff select the size of cones based on the size of your pet. If you notice your pet is able to access their incision site while the e-collar is on or if your pet is able to remove the e-collar, please **contact WCVV at 608-224-1400**, and we will provide direction. WCVV provides cones as part of every spay or neuter package except for outdoor cats. You may request a cone for your outdoor cat as long as you will be keeping the cat inside for 14 days. Never release a cat outside while it is wearing a cone!

Animals may object to the cone, sometimes strongly or obsessively, at first. They may use passive measures such as hanging their heads down or bumble around the house smashing into the furniture, walls, or you. Many will pretend they cannot eat or drink with the cone on. Others will be more dramatic and may furiously try to remove the cone with their front and/or back legs. Don't give in. **BE STRONG AND KEEP THE CONE ON!**

How to Place a Cone on your Pet

Just like a well-fit collar, a well-fit cone will be snug around the neck, loose enough to get one or two fingers between the collar and neck, but tight enough that the animal cannot remove it. Any hard edges should not be applying pressure to the neck. The cone should extend a little past the tip of your pet's nose.

Your pet will be sent home with an appropriately sized cone and some gauze. The gauze can be stretched through the neck loops on the cone. The gauze serves to secure the cone around your pet's neck. If you have a properly fitted flat buckle collar, you may choose to use this in place of the gauze.

It is important to notify WCVV immediately at 606-244-1400 if your pet has been licking or chewing at their incision site. Immediate and proper followup care is vital to continued success in the healing process. WCVV is unable to cover the costs of post-surgical care sought at another veterinary clinic when post-surgical instructions are not followed.

Unfortunately, not everyone will leave the cone on, for whatever reason. Without a cone, some pets may cause or prolong infection. Others may rip out their sutures and need another trip to the vet. Many pets can injure themselves quite severely, painfully, and even fatally when their cone isn't used or used properly. A few days of mild annoyance is preferable to prolonged post-surgical care or death.

But my pet is unable to sleep or eat with a cone on.

Your pet **can** sleep, eat, drink, pee, and poop with a cone on. While your pet may need some time to adjust to the cone, the stricter you are with keeping the cone on, the quicker your pet will adjust to it.

Accessing Food and Water

Bowls can be propped up on other items such as a box or books, or another bowl turned upside down to make access easier. The bowl can also be positioned and held by the owner's hand inside the cone to allow the animal to eat or drink. For the very stubborn cases, the cone can be temporarily removed while the animal eats, but only under direct supervision. Direct supervision means the animal is in direct sight of the owner, and the owner is able to immediately stop any undesired licking, biting, rubbing or scratching. As soon as the animal is finished eating, or the owner is not in direct supervision, the cone should be immediately and securely replaced.

Accessing the Litter box

If you have a covered litter box for your cat, please ensure your cat is able to enter and turn around in the box while the cone is on. If your cat is unable to enter the litter box or turn while inside the litter box, remove the cover. You can place the cover back on the litter box when your pet's recovery has ended and it is safe to remove the cone.

Escaping the Cone

If your pet is able to escape or remove their cone, it is not fitted and secured properly. To ensure proper fit, no more than two fingers should fit between the cone and neck. If using gauze to fit the cone to your pet, ensure the gauze hasn't stretched too much. If so, you may need to purchase more gauze or utilize a flat-buckle collar to attach the cone to your pet. If your pet wears a collar, you can tie the gauze around the collar for extra security. You may also thread your pet's flat-buckle collar through the loops on the cone. Once again, ensure you cannot fit more than one to two fingers between the collar and your pet's neck.

Broken Cones

Sometimes cones rip or tear. Depending on the location and severity, a tear or rip can be mended with heavy-duty tape such as Gorilla tape.

Other Cones: Inflatable, Soft, Neck brace, Recovery suit (Onesie)

Not all cones are created equally. If you decide a different type of cone is best for your pet, you do so at your own risk. Some cones do not offer the same protection as the traditional plastic cone, so be sure to closely monitor your pet.

Other Pets in the Home

It is also extremely important to monitor your pet's interactions with any other pets in the home. Other pets may lick or chew at the recovering pet's incision site or may react negatively to the cone. If another pet in the house is interfering with the post-surgical recovery, you may need to separate the pets until recovery is complete.

We are a phone call away, Monday through Friday from 7:00AM - 7:00PM and Saturdays from 9:00AM - 3:00PM. If you have concerns or questions concerning your pet's post-surgical care, please call WCVV at 608-224-1400.