



Belle's Photo Diary

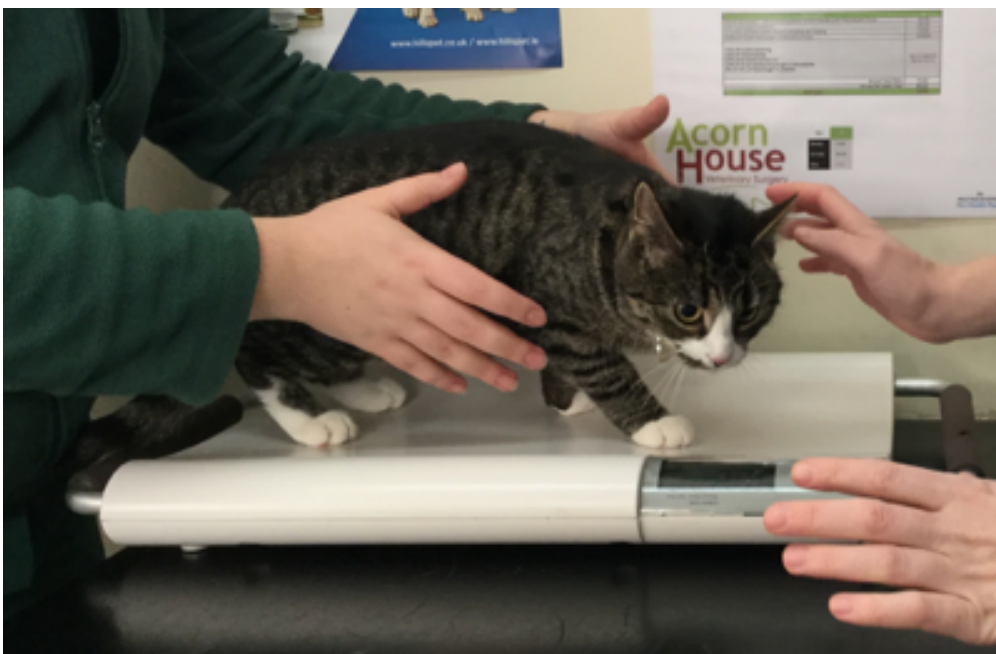


Meet Belle! We were delighted to have her to stay earlier this week when she came to be spayed at Acorn House Vets. Her owner kindly agreed for us to make a photo record of her day to give all of our clients a behind the scenes look at what we do.

Belle and her owner take a quiet seat in the cat-only waiting area. Belle feels safe because her basket is well off the ground and she can see her owner. Nurse Emily calls Belle and her owner into the consulting room.



Emily weighs Belle. Belle is a live wire – note that everyone is poised to catch her in case she launches herself off the scales! Emily checks Belle's details with her owner and explains about the surgery that is planned.





Jess prepares the injection and administers it to Belle.



Belle relaxes in the cat-only hospital ward in peace and quiet, with access to a hide-away igloo bed, whilst her premedication takes effect. Being Belle she does not make use of the bed and concentrates on having a fuss at the front of the kennel!

Once Belle is sleepy, an intravenous cannula is taped into her front leg. This is a very fine tube that goes into the vein – just like when people have a cannula in the back of their hands before they have surgery. At Acorn House Veterinary Surgery every pet has an intravenous cannula in place during their surgery and for several hours afterwards. This is very important so that fluids and medications can be given directly into the bloodstream without delay if there should be any sort of problem during the anaesthetic or recovery.





The anaesthetic injection is given through the cannula and Belle falls asleep. A tube is then put into Belle's mouth. Belle will breathe oxygen and anaesthetic gas through this tube whilst she is asleep.

Emily monitors Belle's breathing, heart rate, pulses, temperature and reflexes whilst Nia prepares Belle for her operation. Monitoring equipment on Belle's tongue and breathing tube measure blood oxygen and respiratory carbon dioxide levels and Emily adjusts the anaesthetic as necessary. Belle is wrapped in cosy blankets and foil to keep her warm and the operating table is heated, because animals and people may lose heat whilst they are under anaesthetic.



The fur is clipped away from the surgery site and Belle's skin is sterilised using an antiseptic solution. Nia scrubs her hands using an antiseptic scrub solution and puts on sterile gloves. Nia also wears theatre scrubs and a surgical cap. The surgical instruments are sterilised at high temperatures and sealed in sterile packs before use. Belle's fur is covered with a sterile drape. All of these precautions prevent infection.



Nia makes a small incision over Belle's left flank. The spay operation can be done from the left or the right side – the veterinary surgeons have their own personal preferences. At Acorn House, Gill is the only vet to perform the spay on the right hand side – so if your cat comes home with stitches on this side, you know who has performed that operation!



The uterus (womb) and ovaries are lifted out of the incision. Surgical thread is tied around the blood vessels that supply the ovaries and uterus. This makes sure that there is no internal bleeding after the operation. Cats and dogs have two long “horns” to their uterus, with an ovary at each end.



The muscles and skin of the body wall are then repaired. Two stitches close the skin wound at the end of the operation. Most cats will leave their wounds alone after surgery, but cats that lick or chew the stitches can wear a special collar or bodysuit to prevent this.



The anaesthetic is switched off and Belle begins to wake up. She is moved to our recovery ward for close monitoring by Kirstie, the ward nurse. It remains important to keep Belle nice and warm as she recovers.

Once Belle is back on her paws, she returns to her large kennel in the cat ward. It is not long before she thinks that she could do with a bite to eat...



..and once she has finished eating, she is back at the front of her kennel looking for more cuddles!

This is our cue to phone Belle's owner and arrange for Belle to go home.

We look forward to seeing Belle in 10 days to take out her stitches and of course, if her owner has any concerns before then, we have our own vets and nurses on site for help and advice 24 hours a day.

Thank you Belle for sharing your story!

