

When anesthesia or sedation carries high risk for your pet, you and your veterinarian may choose to enlist the expertise of an anesthesiologist to reduce that risk and the possibility of anesthesia related complications.

WHAT IS A VETERINARY ANESTHESIOLOGIST?

Anesthesiologists are veterinarians who, after college, have graduated from an accredited veterinary school and have successfully completed an approved residency in anesthesiology.

Anesthesiologists' responsibilities to patients include:

- Pre-anesthetic evaluation and treatment
- Medical management of patients and their anesthetic procedures
- Post-anesthetic evaluation and treatment

THE MEDICAL SPECIALTY OF ANESTHESIOLOGY

Anesthesiology is the practice of veterinary medicine dedicated to the relief of pain and total care of the surgical patient before, during and after surgery. After completing a four-year college program and four years of veterinary school, veterinarians enter a three-year anesthesiology residency training program. After residency training, the successful completion of a rigorous set of qualifying examinations allows the veterinarian to become a Diplomate of the American College of Veterinary Anesthesiologists (see below).

SCOPE OF PRACTICE

The anesthesiologist is the *peri-operative* veterinarian ("peri-" meaning "all-around") who provides medical care to each patient throughout his or her surgical experience. This includes medically evaluating the patient before surgery (*pre-operative*), consulting with the surgical team, providing pain control and support of life functions during surgery (*intra-operative*), supervision care after surgery (*post-operative*) and medically discharging the patient from the recovery unit.

Just as there are doctors who specialize in different aspects of a pet's hospital care such as internists and surgeons, there are doctors called anesthesiologists with special training in the anesthetic care of animals.

WHAT DO ANESTHESIOLOGISTS DO?

Anesthesiologists are concerned with many aspects of a pet's care. Their main task is to provide safe, optimal conditions during surgery and to make the entire hospitalization period as pleasant and comfortable as possible.

Anesthesiologists consider *any* surgical procedure performed on your pet to be of major importance. They are constantly on guard for changes in breathing, heart action, blood pressure or any unexpected events which may occur during surgery. Apart from assuring the optimal *safety* of your pet during surgery, anesthesiologists are specially trained in how to make the surgical procedure as *comfortable and stress free* as possible for your pet.

THE AMERICAN COLLEGE OF VETERINARY ANESTHESIOLOGISTS (ACVA.ORG)

This is the American Veterinary Medical Association specialty board which sets the standards for advanced professionalism in veterinary anesthesiology.

In 2010, the ACVA included 185 Diplomates. The ACVA defines the standards of anesthesia excellence for the veterinary profession, promotes advancements in veterinary anesthesiology, and provides the latest in anesthesia educational programs.

By fostering the highest standards of excellence in veterinary anesthesiology, the ACVA is helping the veterinary profession achieve its goals of providing outstanding service to the public and care to animals.

The Highest Standards of Professional Excellence

Only veterinarians who have successfully completed the certification requirements of the ACVA are Diplomates of the American College of Veterinary Anesthesiologists and have earned the right to be called specialists in veterinary anesthesiology.

Candidates seeking Diplomate status in the ACVA must have: a) received a degree in veterinary medicine from a school accredited by the American Veterinary Medical Association; b) served a one-year rotating internship, and c) completed a three year anesthesiology residency program. The residency program consists of closely supervised training during which the resident works with recognized specialists to acquire additional knowledge and skill in veterinary anesthesiology.

Qualified applicants must submit extensive credentials to the ACVA documenting their training, clinical competency, and scientific contributions to veterinary anesthesiology. Finally, they must pass a comprehensive oral and written examination to earn Diplomate status.