

Standard of Care Defined

According to Webster's New World Medical Dictionary one definition of "*standard of care*" is this:

"In legal terms, it is the level at which the average, prudent provider in a given community would practice. It is how similarly qualified practitioners would have managed the patient's care under the same or similar circumstances."

Essentially, "*standard of care*" should be considered a minimum standard, because it is only confirmed as "*the standard*" when a majority of clinicians have all finally decided that a particular protocol is the right thing to do. Our goal at *Friendship Springs Veterinary Care* is to be a part of the minority of veterinary hospitals that help to set new Standards of Care.

Anesthesia Minimum Standards

Current veterinary anesthesia standard of care is exceedingly minimal. So much so, even our minimal care anesthesia plan at *Friendship Springs Veterinary Care* is already well above what many veterinary hospitals would consider the current standard of care. Like most hospitals our basic, standard-of-care anesthesia protocols for common well care surgeries includes preoperative examination, preanesthetic medications, induction medications, and isoflurane anesthesia. Unlike many hospitals, our basic protocols also additionally include IV catheterization and basic fluid support, higher analgesic techniques including local/regional anesthesia techniques, endotracheal intubation for all patients undergoing these surgeries, and a nurse solely dedicated to anesthesia that doesn't leave the patient's side until they are safely recovered. Our anesthesia monitoring equipment includes pulse oximetry, electrocardiography, blood pressure, and high system pressure warning devices; many hospitals use only one such monitoring device during these surgeries and some still use no monitoring devices at all. This is our minimum standard of care.

Advanced Anesthesia

In spite of the level of our minimal care standards, we can offer better. Our Advanced Anesthesia includes sevoflurane gas anesthesia in place of isoflurane gas anesthesia (what most veterinarians use) and continuous rate infusion pump delivery of analgesics, hypnotics, pressor (blood pressure) agents, and other medications. **Sevoflurane** is, in our opinion, a better anesthetic gas than isoflurane, because sevoflurane blood levels can be adjusted more quickly than isoflurane blood levels. This improves the safety for your pet during the anesthetic procedure because it allows us to more quickly and precisely increase or decrease depth of anesthesia as needed. This can be critically important when seconds count. And, **continuous rate infusions** of IV drugs, such as morphine (narcotic), lidocaine (local anesthetic), ketamine (hypnotic), and dopamine (pressor agent) increase safety during your pet's anesthetic procedure because they improve sedation and analgesia. This in turn allows us to use lesser amounts of anesthetic gas. Because anesthetic gases are the most potent drug used during anesthesia, they have the most potential causing serious adverse effects, such as hypotension (low blood pressure).

The overall benefit of Advanced Anesthesia is to decrease risk, hasten recovery, and improve pain relief. For further information and reading we recommend the following web page: VeterinaryPartner.com - [Is Anesthesia Safe?](http://VeterinaryPartner.com)

And, in case your wondering.... When Dr. Cutchin's own pets need anesthesia, you can bet he is providing advanced anesthesia for them.

Remember, at *Friendship Springs Veterinary Care* we recommend only those services that our patients need, and we never recommend anything that we believe is unnecessary.