SURGICAL PREPERATION OF THE ANIMAL FOR SURGERY

* Clip the fur from the surgical site after the animal has been anaesthetised.
* Remove the clipped fur with a vacuum cleaner.
* Perform this initial clipping in a separate area so that the operating area is not contaminated.
* When clipping particular care needs to be taken to avoid damaging the delicate skin.
* Clean the skin using a suitable disinfectant, for example Chlorhexidine, either in alcohol or water – but avoid using too much disinfectant solution, as this can increase the risk of the animal becoming hypothermic.
* Alcohol alone is not suitable for disinfection of the skin.
* An ointment can be applied to the eyes to prevent drying during anaesthesia.

SURGICAL PREPERATION FOR THE SURGEON

* An assistant should open the outer wrapping of instrument packs, sutures, and scalpel blades.
* The surgeon needs to take care, when unwrapping the pack to drop the corners of the drapes, so that the back of their hand does not touch the surface of the table.
* The surgeon drapes the animal, once again taking care not to touch any non-sterile surface.
* Using a drape prevents sterilised items touching the animals’ fur, and becoming contaminated.
* When using a paper drape, a suitable-sized hole can be cut to access the surgical site. Avoid cutting along one of the pre-folded sections as this can prevent the drape conforming to the animal.
* The sterile field can be extended by using an additional paper or cloth drape.
* Drapes may need to be cut to size, or positioned carefully so that the position of the animal’s nose in the face mask can be monitored – alternatively a transparent drape can be used.
* Several mask designs provide much more secure placement of the animal’s nose.
* The position of the head can be fixed using tape, but care must be taken not to interfere with respiratory movements, or to fix the animal’s limbs in an abnormal position.