Horse Recovery from Anesthesia

Prolonged recumbency is not a natural state for normal horses. Their inherent and natural tendency to flee when threatened results in many horses trying to rise before they have fully recovered from the effects of anesthetic drugs.

- The quality and duration of recovery are determined by multiple factors including, but not limited to:
  - The horse’s physical condition and temperament
  - The dose and route of anesthetic drug administration
  - The nature of the environment at the recovery site
  - The use of appropriate padding during recumbency
  - The duration of anesthesia
  - The type of surgery
  - The monitoring and treatment of anesthetic events (such as hypotension or hemorrhage)
  - The administration of sedatives or drug antagonists during recovery

The Colorado State University Veterinary Teaching Hospital has equipment and processes well-suited for administering anesthesia and managing the anesthetic recovery of horses:

- Tail/head rope
- Endotracheal intubation
- Oxygen source
- Towel to cover the eye
- Sling suspension system

We administer anesthesia and manage the anesthetic recovery of horses in a combination of ways:

1) On the floor of a padded stall using head and/or tail ropes
2) Using a mattress and a padded stall along with head and/or tail ropes
3) Capability to use sling system and/or inflating/deflating air pillow to increase rest time following anesthesia