

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

WHAT WILL HAPPEN DURING MY PET'S ULTRASOUND TODAY?

On your pet's arrival, you will be greeted by our receptionist and asked to fill out a consent form. Once it is completed a veterinary technician will check you in and go over the ultrasound procedure. Your pet will then be brought into our ultrasound suite and placed in a soft, comfortable positioning device. In most cases we shave the hair at the location of the ultrasound exam in order to obtain better images and a more accurate diagnosis.

HOW LONG WILL MY PET'S ULTRASOUND EXAM TAKE?

In most cases it takes approximately 30-45 minutes to perform the ultrasound exam. If your pet needs a biopsy, that is performed after the ultrasound and does require additional time.

WILL I HAVE RESULTS FROM THE ULTRASOUND TODAY?

Ultrasound results will be emailed to your referring veterinarian within 24 hours (except weekends). Our radiologist will discuss their findings with you after the exam is completed.

WHY CAN'T I BE WITH MY PET DURING THE ULTRASOUND EXAM?

Many pet owners believe their pet will be less stressed and more cooperative if they are with them during the exam but it is often the opposite. It is also important to avoid interruptions and possible distractions to allow the radiologist to fully concentrate on the ultrasound exam. Therefore, an ultrasound exam can be performed more efficiently and more accurately when only trained staff is helping with your pet.

WHY MIGHT MY PET NEED SEDATION OR LIGHT ANESTHESIA? WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

Ultrasound diagnoses often rely on subtle changes and when patients are tense, in pain, or panting, many lesions can be missed. In our experience sedation, and in some cases light anesthesia, often allows for a faster and more accurate exam. When performing biopsies and/or fluid drainages, using sedation or light anesthesia allows us to perform the procedure more safely and more comfortably for your pet. If your pet is sedated, he/she will likely to be groggy for the remainder of the day. His/her sense of balance may also be off. Occasionally patients have a life threatening reaction to sedation or anesthesia but this is extremely rare with modern anesthetics and we believe the more accurate diagnoses and safer procedure outweigh anesthetic risks.

WHY WOULD MY PET NEED A BIOPSY?

Ultrasound is very good to look inside of the body but several diseases can have similar appearances (e.g. tumors and abscesses). Determining the type of cells present within a lesion by obtaining a very small sample allows us to make a final differentiation in most cases. We strongly recommend ultrasound guided needle biopsies when the type of cells present is needed to obtain a final diagnosis. If a biopsy is recommended, a veterinary technician or radiologist will discuss it with you. A biopsy is never performed without your consent.

WHAT IS THE BIOPSY PROCEDURE? ARE THERE ANY RISKS?

The skin is first cleaned with a surgical soap and then a small needle (smaller than those used for blood samples) is inserted, with ultrasound guidance, into the area of concern. An average of 3 samples is obtained to ensure the greatest diagnostic yield. The samples are transferred to a glass slide, prepared, and sent to the laboratory for interpretation by another specialists (cytopathologist). If a larger tru-cut biopsy is indicated, a sample will be obtained and placed in a special solution to be sent to a pathologist. The biggest risk of needle biopsies is internal bleeding, but it is rare. We conducted a retrospective study including over 3000 biopsies and severe internal bleeding occurred in less than 0.25% of the patients. If any significant bleeding is detected during the procedure, we will notify you and your referring veterinarian immediately.

WHEN WILL I HAVE RESULTS FROM THE BIOPSY?

Fine needle biopsy results will be sent to your referring veterinarian within 24-48 hours (except weekends). Tru-Cut biopsy results are not available before 48-72 hours and will also be sent to your referring veterinarian. Please contact your veterinarian to discuss results.