

Ultrasounds:

Ultrasound is a non-invasive procedure that uses sound waves to generate images of organs within the patient's body. It is a safe and effective way to help take a better look at what is going on within your pet's abdomen or chest and can provide us with important information to help diagnose your pet quickly and comfortably. In emergency situations, an ultrasound can be done quickly to assess how urgent a patient's condition is and can help provide information to help triage patients to get the care they need quickly.

- Ultrasound allows us to look at the bladder to help diagnose bladder stones or tumours. It can also be used to visualize the bladder and safely perform a cystocentesis (collect sterile urine directly from the bladder with a small needle.)
- Evaluation of the spleen, liver, gall bladder, pancreas and kidneys
- Ultrasound may help identify internal tumours and depending on location, an ultrasound may help to collect a sample to gain information regarding prognosis
- Identifying fluid within the chest or abdomen and may assist in collection of this fluid
- Ultrasound may assist in finding a foreign body (an inappropriate object that your pet may have eaten)
- Early diagnosis of pregnancy. It can also be used to assess fetal viability later in pregnancy which may help assist in deciding if a patient needs a cesarian.
- Identification of pyometra (Infection within the uterus in patients that are not spayed.)

What can I expect if my pet requires an ultrasound?

If an ultrasound is recommended urgently the procedure may be done within a few hours of your pet's arrival in the hospital. Because our patients are typically furry, we will often shave the area of concern to allow us to get a better image.

Depending on the patient, their condition and the reason for the ultrasound, a small amount of sedation may be recommended.

Although ultrasounds are non-painful if a patient has a painful abdomen, pain medication may be recommended to help provide comfort to the patient during the procedure. It is very important to work with the patient if they are restless, we may focus the ultrasound on specific organs or take a break between organs to make sure the patient is happy and stress free.

If an ultrasound can be done non-urgently, they are typically scheduled as a drop off appointment and we recommend that the patients are fasted (no food after midnight the night before the procedure and no breakfast the morning of.) Keeping patient comfort in mind we will also often send home a small dose of mild sedation to help the patient relax for the procedure.

What are our qualifications?

Ultrasound is advancing the quality of care we can provide to our patients and having this technology will allow us to help provide more immediate information to our clients about their pet's condition which is crucial in emergency situations.

While many of our veterinarians have some experience with ultrasound use, we have also invested in courses to help gain proficiency with this newer technology.

For complicated cases our veterinarians may recommend that images are collected and sent to radiologists for their opinion (very similar to human medicine.) Depending on the case our veterinarians may recommend a consult with an internal medicine specialist with more advanced training if they feel this is in the best interest of the patient.

