



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS For Ultrasonography

Will I have ultrasound and biopsy results today?

Ultrasound and cardiology work ups, and fine-needle biopsy, results will be faxed to your referring veterinarian within 24 hours (except weekends). Tru-Cut biopsy results are usually not available before 48-72 hours. Please contact your referring veterinarian to discuss results.

What will happen during my pet's ultrasound appointment?

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. Then your pet will be brought to our ultrasound suite, possibly sedated or anesthetized (see below) and placed in a soft and comfortable positioning device. In most cases we shave the hair at the location of the ultrasound exam to obtain better images and a more accurate diagnosis. It takes approximately 30-45 minutes to perform the ultrasound exam.

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 but it is often the opposite. It is also important to avoid interruptions and possible distractions to allow the sonographer to fully concentrate on the ultrasound exam. Therefore an ultrasound examination can be performed more efficiently and more accurately when only trained staff is helping with your pet.

Why might we need 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, heavy sedation or light anesthesia often allows for a faster and *more accurate* examination. Light anesthesia also allows us to perform biopsies and/or fluid drainage immediately, more safely and more accurately. For these reasons, we may recommend light anesthesia *from the start* for examinations other than cardiac, pregnancy and urinary bladder examinations, particularly when we expect to perform ultrasound-guided fine needle biopsies. What are the risks? Occasionally patients have a life threatening reaction to anesthesia but this is extremely rare with modern anesthetics and we believe the more accurate diagnoses and safer biopsies outweigh anesthetic risks.

Why would my pet need a biopsy?

Ultrasound is very good to look inside the body but several diseases can have a similar appearance (e.g. tumors and abscesses). Determining the type of cells present within a lesion by obtaining a very small sample with a small needle allows us to make a final differentiation in most cases. We strongly recommend ultrasound-guided needle biopsies when we need to know the type of cells present to obtain a final diagnosis. If this is the case with your pet, the 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 cleaned with surgical soap and a small needle (smaller than those used for blood samples) is inserted with ultrasound guidance into the area of concern. An average of four samples are taken to ensure that a diagnosis is obtained. The samples are transferred to a glass slide, prepared, and read by another specialist (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 .25 % of the patients. If any significant bleeding is detected during the procedure, we will notify you and your referring veterinarian immediately.