

What to Expect: Small Animal MRI

APPOINTMENT INFORMATION & GUIDELINES

How to Prepare For MRI

Diagnostic imaging requires that the patient remains extremely still for a period of time. For this reason, it is necessary that your pet undergoes general anesthesia for this procedure. To prepare for this, all food, including treats, should be withheld starting at 10:00 p.m. the night before the examination; moderate amounts of water are allowed overnight. Water should be removed by 6 a.m..

Depending on your pet's medical condition, anesthesia and MRI may involve some risks. This will be discussed with you in detail during the admission process.

During the admission process, we will be happy to answer any questions you might have regarding the MRI procedure. We will also ask that you sign a consent form for the procedure, including the administration of anesthesia. You are welcome to wait in the reception area during the scan process or, for your convenience, you can leave your pet with us and schedule a time to return after the examination. If you choose to leave, please make sure our staff knows how to contact you in the event of a question, scheduling change, or emergency. Please make arrangements to pick your pet up at the scheduled time.

The MRI Examination Process

1. Your pet will undergo a physical examination in preparation for anesthesia.
2. An intravenous catheter will be placed in a leg vein for the administration of anesthetic agents.
Note: Preparation for the catheter requires hair clipping at the site; a small area on your pet's chest may also be shaved to place a patch that monitors heart rate.
3. Your pet will then be moved to the MRI magnet room, positioned, and scanned while under anesthesia.
4. After the MRI exam, your pet will be brought to a recovery room, where it will be allowed to wake up from anesthesia. Shortly thereafter your pet will be ready to go home.
5. The MRI examination will be interpreted by a board-certified veterinary radiologist. The written report will be sent to your referring veterinarian the next business day.
6. The normal time for a MRI exam is 1-2 hours. However, individual animals vary in their recovery time. You should plan on leaving your pet with us between 4-8 hours.

After the Exam

A pressure bandage will be placed on your pet's leg when the intravenous catheter is removed to prevent bleeding at the site. Be sure to remove this bandage after one hour. It is normal for pets to be quiet following general anesthesia. Once home, you may offer your pet small amounts of water. If no stomach upset is noted, this may be followed by a light meal. Although uncommon, some pets may experience a mild cough for several days following their anesthesia. If you observe any unusual behavior, or have any concerns, contact your veterinarian immediately. Animals having been under anesthesia may behave in an unpredictable manner for 12-36 hours following recovery. Animals may bite if confused or startled, use caution during this time and keep pets away from young children.

You will need to schedule an appointment with your veterinarian to discuss the results of the MRI examination.

