Portosystemic Shunt Pre Evaluation/Surgery Information and Estimate

To our referring veterinarians:

Pets suspected of having liver shunts should be placed on medical management for several weeks prior to their surgical appointment at UTCVM. Treatment recommendations include lactulose and a protein restricted diet (e.g., Hills L/D), plus antibiotics for dogs with urinary tract infections or severe hepatic encephalopathy. All patients need to be up to date on core vaccines, including rabies vaccine (if age appropriate), before their appointment at UTCVM.

PSS Workup Estimate
$950.00-1900.00

Extrahepatic PSS
The initial appointment will be made on the Soft Tissue Service on a Tuesday or Thursday. The client will meet with the surgery team at this time. The exam and any blood testing will be performed on the day of the appointment. The scintigraphy or portogram test is usually performed on the afternoon of the initial appointment. If the pet is determined to have an operable extrahepatic PSS, the surgery can usually be performed the following day. Occasionally other emergencies may delay diagnostics or surgery. The patient usually stays in our ICU for 48 hours after surgery before being discharged. The total hospital stay for a typical patient with an extrahepatic shunt is 4-5 days. The workup and surgery estimate is $3000.00-3600.00.

Intrahepatic PSS
A CT scan will be performed to diagnose this defect. The exam, blood testing and CT are typically performed at the initial visit –usually over a two day period. The “gold standard” repair procedure for an intrahepatic shunt is percutaneous transvenous coil embolization (“coiling”), which is a minimally invasive technique; however, surgery can be performed in some cases (e.g. left sided IHPSS). The patient needs to be at least 6 months of age to undergo a coil procedure, which is performed by Dr. Cassie Lux at UTCVM. If the patient is determined to have a repairable intrahepatic shunt that requires coil and Dr. Lux is not on clinics at the time of the initial appointment, a second appointment will need to be scheduled. If the patient has a CT performed prior to 6 months of age, we will need to repeat the CT at UTCVM before any coil procedure. Dr. Karen Tobias performs the surgical IHPSS repairs; if Dr. Tobias is not on clinics at the time of the initial appointment, a second appointment may need to be scheduled. The hospital stay for a typical intrahepatic shunt is 4-5 days. The workup and surgery estimate is $3600.00-8000.00 depending on how the shunt is repaired.

If you have questions about initial medical management, the referring veterinarian may contact the Surgery, Internal Medicine, or Nutrition Service. If medical management is not working or the patient has ascites, however, please contact the Internal Medicine service as this may be indicative of a nonsurgical condition. If the patient is on medical management and is experiencing uncontrollable seizures, the patient should be referred to our Neurology Service.

Visit Information: https://vetmed.tennessee.edu/vmc/Clients/Documents/UTCVM_WHAT%20TO%20EXPECT_SoftTissueSx.pdf
Hospital Payment Policy: https://vetmed.tennessee.edu/vmc/Clients/Pages/Payment-Policy.aspx

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