

What to Expect: Orthopedic Surgery

EVALUATION APPOINTMENT INFORMATION & GUIDELINES

GENERAL INFORMATION

UTCVM Veterinary Medical Center is an academic veterinary teaching hospital and functions differently than your primary veterinarian's office. The Orthopedic Service is staffed by board certified orthopedic surgeons, surgery residents, interns, veterinary students, and a licensed veterinary technician, that work as a team to provide your pet with the best possible care.

During your visit you will meet with a student and a veterinarian who will obtain a medical history and perform an examination. Your appointment is designed to provide time for us to meet you and your pet and make a plan for the day. The initial appointment usually takes one hour, and sometimes slightly longer. Occasionally, an injured or critical patient may take precedence. We appreciate your understanding.

After the initial examination, you will be provided with recommendations for diagnostic tests, the health care plan estimated cost, and the expected time to complete the diagnostic work-up for your pet. Typically, the diagnostic tests/treatments will take the remainder of the day. **A visit duration for work-up and radiographs can range from 2-8 hours.** Your pet will then be admitted to the hospital for his/her diagnostic workup.

While we are performing the medical tests, you are welcome to stay in the waiting room or leave the hospital. When you pick your animal up following the orthopedic assessment, you will again meet with the student and primary clinician to talk about results and plans. If your pet requires surgery, the primary clinician will discuss the surgery appointment date and time with you.

An orthopedic surgeon evaluates every case, but at times, an orthopedic resident or intern veterinarian will continue to provide the health plan and discuss the orthopedic findings. The orthopedic surgeons are intimately involved with all surgical procedures and care of your pet.

Not all diagnostic tests or treatments may be available the day of your pet's appointment. Our hospital's Diagnostic Imaging Service provides service for the entire hospital. Please understand that imaging may not be available the same day as your appointment. We ask that you please be patient during your visit. We are trying to provide the best service possible and critical and emergent cases will always take precedence over other cases.

COMMUNICATIONS

While your pet is at the veterinary medical center and for any follow-up communication, we need to know the best way to contact you. **In order to receive our calls, please make sure your phone accepts blocked numbers and/or turn off the "silence unknown caller" function. Phone calls from our hospital services may show up on your caller ID as "restricted" or "unknown caller." Please be prepared to answer these calls.**

All information from your pet's visit with the Orthopedic Service at UTCVM Veterinary Medical Center is shared with your primary veterinarian. It is your responsibility to ensure that we have the correct information regarding your pet's primary and referring veterinarians.

FEES

Your veterinarian may be able to provide a rough cost estimate for the visit based on the general nature of your pet's problems. A more specific estimate of the cost of evaluation will be given to you during your first visit. Adjustments to this estimate will be given to you if changes develop or are anticipated during your pet's evaluation or treatment.

FINANCIAL POLICY

The financial policy of the hospital requires full payment for the entire bill when your pet is discharged from the hospital. If your pet stays overnight, you will be required to submit half of the total expected cost as a deposit. We accept major credit cards, Care Credit, cash or check as forms of payments.

AGGRESSIVE ANIMALS

The Orthopedic Service will not see aggressive patient referrals without seeing the Behavior Service first. This is for the safety of our staff and students and to provide a better experience for your pet during the visit. An additional professional fee will be applied for animals requiring assistance from the Behavior Service.

CANCELLATION POLICY

We often have a waiting time of over a month for appointments. We have reserved this time especially for you and your pet. Please call us (865-974-8387) at least 24 hours in advance if you are unable to make your scheduled appointment. **UTCVM is located in the Eastern Time Zone.**

ORTHOPEDIC SURGERY PRE-APPOINTMENT CHECKLIST

- Please **DO NOT** feed your pet after midnight the night before the appointment unless otherwise indicated by your veterinarian (e.g., pets with low blood sugar). We may ask you to reschedule your appointment if you feed your pet on the day of the appointment. Water can be given up to the time of appointment.
- Please have your primary veterinarian forward vaccination history to UTCVM **prior** to your appointment. Vaccinations must be up to date prior to the appointment unless there is a specific medical reason that your pet cannot be vaccinated.
- If your pet is diabetic, feed and administer insulin as usual.
- Give the morning medication as usual (if needed, a small amount of food can be used to administer medication).
- Please **DO NOT** give any anti-inflammatory medications for 48 hours prior to your pet's appointment.
- Bring all medications that your pet is currently taking to your appointment. These should be in their original prescription containers.
- Bring copies of pertinent lab test results, medical records and all radiographs (films) from YOUR CURRENT AND PREVIOUS VETERINARIANS, INCLUDING SPECIALISTS, to the initial appointment or have your veterinarian(s) send them prior to the appointment. Digital images may be emailed to utvetref@utk.edu.**
- If you have any pet insurance you want us to file, please bring the forms with you. If you are seeking a payment plan option it is advised to do so prior to your appointment.

Visit duration for work-up and radiographs can range from 2-8 hours; 2 hours for consultation only.

****Please note that all pets should be brought to the Veterinary Medical Center on a leash or in a pet carrier.****

Thank you for choosing UTCVM Veterinary Medical Center for your pet's care. We look forward to meeting you!

ORTHOPEDIC SURGERY FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What's included in a work up when my pet is referred to the Orthopedic Surgery Service?

Minimum workup includes a thorough orthopedic physical exam and usually imaging. Depending on your pet's case, workups can include, gait analysis, in-house consultation, sedation and imaging, joint taps, ultrasound, CT scan, and occasional needle aspirates for culture/cytology, and CBC/chemistry panel.

Is it required that the patient be current on vaccines?

Yes, ideally the patient should be up to date on all vaccines. If your pet is behind on vaccines they should not be given within 10 days of the appointment.

Will surgery and specialized procedures take place on the day of the initial evaluation?

No, most procedures/surgeries/tests requiring general anesthesia will be performed the following day. The orthopedic service receives emergency cases along with scheduled evaluations. Occasionally we may have to postpone a scheduled surgery to attend to an emergent case. If this occurs, we will try to accommodate your travel needs the best we can. If you have traveled a long distances and leave your pet at UTCVM after the initial consult, we are usually able to hospitalize your pet until the surgery/procedure can be completed. We will stay in close contact with you regarding any changes required.

What is the recovery period if my pet has surgery?

Recovery is often discussed as part of a proposed treatment plan. The recovery period varies depending on the type of surgery performed and the overall health of your pet. Rehabilitation and/or physical therapy may be recommended as part of the recovery plan.

Does my pet need physical therapy/rehabilitation after surgery?

Some surgical cases receive some physical therapy the day after surgery before they are discharged. If any additional physical therapy/rehabilitation is needed we will discuss that on the day of discharge and will help facilitate setting up appointments with our Physical Therapy Rehabilitation Service.

What is the success rate if my pet has surgery?

This depends on the type of surgery being performed and your pet's overall health.

Will my pet need 24 hour care after surgery?

Our ICU service will provide 24 hour care after surgery if it is deemed necessary. Once this level of care is no longer needed, recommendations will be made based on the needs of the your pet and the home environment.

What are my pet's restrictions after surgery is performed?

This depends on the type of surgery that was performed on your pet and how well your pet responds to the procedure. Restrictions after surgery will be discussed in detail on the day of discharge which is generally the day after surgery.

When can I bathe my pet?

Generally the animal should be bathed prior to the appointment, however, this is not always possible. Following surgery bathing is not recommended until the surgical incisions are healed. Bathing may also be discouraged if footing is questionable and the patient may fall in the process. Ask for advice at the time of discharge.

I have other pets at home. Should I keep my pet that's had surgery separated from the other animals?

Animals that have recent surgeries should be isolated from other animals in the household until the veterinary surgeon gives permission to do otherwise.

Will my pet need to wear an e-collar after surgery?

A collar is often required to protect the sutured incision. However, specific recommendations are based on individual cases.

Will my pet need to have bandages removed or changed?

Bandaging is very case specific and general recommendations are not reliable. If your animal needs bandaging, details regarding this treatment will be addressed in the discharge instructions.

What if my pet has been referred for a total hip replacement?

The initial appointment is to evaluate the need for a hip replacement. If the patient is found to be a good candidate for hip replacement, then the surgery is scheduled. Much care goes into the preparation and execution of this procedure.

What if my pet is coming for an Angular Limb Deformity?

Each limb deformity is unique and complex requiring special planning and preparation. This process will be discussed at the time of the appointment.

If you have any questions or concerns please contact us at: 865-974-8387 or email at utvetortho@utk.edu