



**GULF COAST
VETERINARY
SPECIALISTS**

*Advancing Compassionate
Veterinary Care*

Acupuncture
713.693.1166

Dermatology
& Allergy
713.693.1188

Diagnostic
Imaging
713.693.1177

Internal Medicine
& Critical Care
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TGCVS Client Newsletter

July 2010

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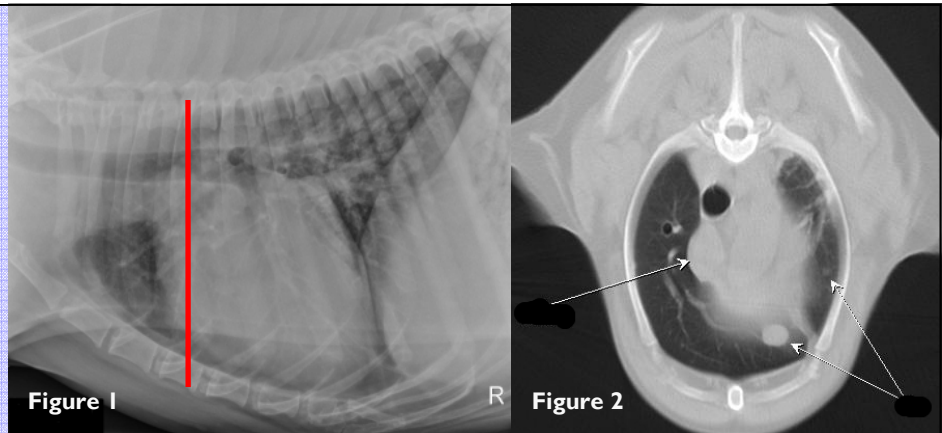


State of the Art Care for Your Pet

CT Imaging of the Chest—A Better Way to See

Figure 1: No pulmonary nodules are seen on this lateral chest x-ray. The red line indicates the area on the CT slice in figure 2

Fig. 2: The pulmonary nodules seen in this CT image are highlighted by the arrows and were most likely not seen on x-rays because they were hidden by the heart



Imaging of the chest is a commonly used diagnostic tool for evaluating many diseases of the dog and cat. It is extremely important in staging various cancers and when forming a treatment plan and prognosis for a patient with cancer. Chest x-rays are the mainstay of evaluating the lungs and can provide a wealth of information. However, in some instances, chest x-rays may not be conclusive.

X-rays provide a two dimensional image of a three dimensional object (your pet). This means that some structures are superimposed on top of each other, making visualization difficult. In addition, some areas of the chest are just not visualized well on x-rays, for example—the mediastinum, which is the area right in front of the heart. When the goal is to identify small or subtle lesions, there is a greater chance that they will not be seen—as the human eye can only see objects greater than 2mm in size.




An exotic cat is monitored by one of our radiology technicians while a CT scan is performed

CT works by taking a continuous circular x-ray around your pet while sliding the patient on a table through an opening in the center of the machine—exactly like a CT scan is done in human medicine. CT images are then reconstructed as “slices” by the computer. CT has the advantage of eliminating all


superimposition of structures by being able to look at the chest much like looking at individual pages in a book. This lack of superimposition as well as a high degree of tissue contrast allows much greater evaluation of the area being imaged.

Perhaps the most common reason for obtaining a CT of the chest is to evaluate for pulmonary metastatic disease (the spreading of cancer into the lungs). In many cases, being able to identify whether or not a cancer has spread into the lungs has a profound affect on treatment and prognosis. It has been shown that helical CT imaging of the chest is significantly more sensitive than survey chest x-rays in detecting lung nodules. One study of 18 dogs showed that approximately 90% of lung nodules detected on CT imaging were not seen on chest x-rays! CT scanning is also useful in planning radiation therapy for cancer patients, much like they do in human medicine.

Here at Gulf Coast Veterinary Specialists, we utilize two CT scanners to provide the most advanced care to your pets. All our CT images are interpreted by a board certified radiologist. Once the CT scan has been evaluated—the radiologist will consult with the specialist in charge of your pet’s care and we will inform your primary veterinarian of all findings as well.




July 11th is All American Pet Photo Day! Visit our Gulf Coast Veterinary Internal Medicine & Critical Care FB page and post an All American photo of your pet. You could win 2 Astros tickets!





Kitty Korner

Summer is a time when fleas are at their worst, especially in this hot and humid Houston weather. Make sure that your cat is protected year round with a flea preventative. Many available topical medications are placed between the shoulder blades where cats cannot lick the medicine off of them. Make sure to purchase your cat's flea medication from a trusted veterinary source. Medication sold over the counter may not provide enough protection. NEVER use a medication labeled for a dog on your cat, even if you decrease the dose; it can cause severe and life threatening medical problems. Remember—cats also need year round heartworm preventative! Even indoor cats can become infected with a single mosquito bite and it only takes one worm to cause serious health problems. Unlike dogs, there is no treatment for feline heartworm disease and prevention is the cure!

Do you have this toxic plant in your yard?



Sago Palm plants (*Cycas revoluta*) are very popular landscaping plants in the Houston area. Unfortunately they are very toxic to animals. All parts of the plant are toxic if ingested, but the highest amount of poison is found in the seeds, pods and young plants. The toxin is quickly absorbed and causes severe vomiting & diarrhea which most commonly progresses to liver failure, bleeding problems and in some instances neurological signs like twitching or seizures. If pets are able to survive the acute insult of the toxin, chronic liver failure can occur up to 6 months post exposure. The best way to avoid these problems is prevention. If you have pets, consider removing these plants from the area immediately as ingestion is often fatal.



Tear out and post near the phone

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Diagnostic Imaging
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Find GCVS on the Internet at www.gcv.com



Find all of the Gulf Coast Departments on Facebook!

Emergency Numbers after 6pm

National Animal Poison Control
1-888-426-4435

Animal Emergency Clinic
(in the Gulf Coast building)
713-693-1100

Veterinary Emergency Referral Group
(Hwy 10 and Campbell)
713-932-9589

Animal Emergency Center
(Hwy 6 and Keith Harrow)
832-593-8387

Animal Emergency Clinic
(Hwy 249 and Cypresswood)
281-890-8875

Animal Urgent Care Center
(Woodlands)
281-367-5444

July Pet of the Month



Meet Oswaldo! Oswaldo came to Gulf Coast Internal Medicine in December 2009. He was diagnosed with diabetes which was complicated by a Toxoplasmosis infection. Soon after his infection was diagnosed, he was started on antibiotics and seemed to be improving. However in March 2010, he returned to Gulf Coast suffering from seizures—a result

of the Toxoplasmosis infection. At that time, he was also diagnosed with a thyroid tumor. During treatment for his thyroid tumor, he had complications which caused his heart to stop beating for approximately 4 minutes. True to his love for life Oswaldo fought back and earned the love of all the doctors and nurses who cared for him daily. He was known by our staff lovingly as Batman, Mr. Nosey, Ozzie or simply Very Handsome Cat as he was affectionately called by Dr. Heald, his internal medicine doctor. Ozzie's wonderful family and friends never gave up hope, and Ozzie continued to defy the odds. Sadly however, he lost his fight and crossed over the Rainbow Bridge April 23rd, 2010. Ozzie touched every person's heart that he came in contact with. Such a testament to the great, strong and amazing cat that Oswaldo was. We will miss you Ozzie—but you will be in our hearts forever.

Dog Tales..... Preventing Heat Stroke in Your Dog

Houston has been known to be a *little* hot during the summer months—which can mean lots of fun outside time for you and your pet. However, just like people, dogs can get heat exhaustion and this can lead to a serious health emergency. Unlike people, dogs cannot sweat. They get rid of extra heat by panting and staying in the shade. Unfortunately, the humidity of Houston makes their panting less effective at getting rid of extra heat, making Houston a “hot spot” for heat exhaustion. Some



breeds that have pre-existing airway issues, such as Pugs, Frenchies and Bulldogs, are at greater risk for heat stroke because excessive panting can cause their airways to swell and cause additional overheating. If you suspect your pet has become overheated, do not place them in cold water—this can traumatize their body. They can be rinsed off with the water hose (tepid water) or a damp towel can be placed on them until you can get to your veterinarian.

Tip: for keeping your pet cool during the summer



- NEVER leave your pet unattended in the car. Even 5 minutes is enough time for your pet to become overheated!
- Keep plenty of water available
- Try to limit outdoor activities to the early morning or evening
- If your pet appears to be panting a lot or breathing hard—take a break and find some shade