

## **GULF COAST AVIAN AND EXOTICS**

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### **GENERAL INFORMATION - PLEASE READ AND KEEP**

#### **OUTPATIENT & INPATIENT APPOINTMENTS**

The doctors see patients Monday through Saturday by appointment. An appointment will save you time when you arrive. Occasionally, there are emergencies that must be “worked in” to the schedule. We will do everything possible to minimize appointment delays due to emergencies that must be seen. You may schedule your pet as an outpatient for the day if one of the doctors has examined your pet previously and the problems have been discussed. ***Outpatients are received as early as 7:15am and can be picked up as late as 5:30pm.*** We will ask you to fill out a Patient Admission Information Form that will update us on your pet’s condition and give us contact numbers to reach you.

#### **CALLS AFTER SURGERY OR PROCEDURES**

The surgery/procedure schedule is often not predictable due to the need for unscheduled emergency surgeries. We typically call clients when the surgery/procedure is completed. However, sometimes we get delayed, cannot make contact immediately, or do not make contact on the initial call. If you have not been called by 5:00PM on the day of the procedure, please call us. If the doctor cannot come to the phone, you will be called back as soon as possible that day or evening.

#### **IN-HOSPITAL REFERRALS**

Occasionally, multi-diagnostic care may be in the best interest of your pet. In such cases, Gulf Coast Avian & Exotics may consult with other specialists at Gulf Coast Veterinary Specialists.

#### **UPDATES AND PROGRESS REPORTS**

If your pet is hospitalized, we know you are anxious to receive an update as soon as possible. We also want to keep you informed. The doctor and technicians are able to give information after morning rounds. ***Therefore, we ask that you not call before 10AM. You may call in for updates and progress reports from 10:00AM to 5:00PM Monday through Friday and Saturday from 9:00 to 11:00AM when a receptionist is on duty.*** We are closed on Sunday. Technicians responsible for night and weekend patient care are very busy taking care of your pets. Because the switchboard is closed, they cannot receive calls to give progress reports and updates. For security reasons, they are not authorized to unlock doors and allow visitation after office hours.

#### **QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS**

Your questions are encouraged! We want you to be well informed about your pet’s condition, diagnosis, and recommended treatment. If surgery is necessary, we urge you to discuss your concerns with the doctor. A written estimate will be provided prior to surgery. Your pet is receiving the finest care in a state-of-the-art specialty hospital. We are proud of our hospital and staff and want you to be comfortable in all aspects of your pet’s care while in our facility. Comments and constructive criticism are welcome.

#### **DOCTORS’ CALL-BACK SCHEDULES**

The doctors receive many phone calls each day. They take as many as they can between appointments and procedures. At times, they must call back as soon as possible or return calls after the hospital closes. Please be sure to give day and night numbers as well as pager and mobile phone numbers. ***Pagers cannot be used for after-hours calls.*** The doctors have trained their technicians to return some of the calls in order to speed up callbacks and reassure you about your pet’s condition.

#### **VISITATION**

We know how difficult it is for you to leave your pet if hospitalization is required. If your pet needs to stay in the hospital for more than two (2) days, you are welcome to schedule a visit. ***Visitation must be scheduled in advance.*** Special arrangements may be made for the critically ill. Please keep in mind that your pet could be very excited or disappointed after you leave. For this reason, visiting is not necessarily the best thing for your pet, but your doctor will be happy to discuss this with you.

#### **DISCHARGES**

Please call before you pick up your pet to make sure the paperwork is ready and schedule a discharge time. Calling will help alleviate waiting time. The doctor or technicians will go over the discharge instructions. If you have ANY questions, we will want to answer them for you before you go home. If a recheck examination is needed, you may want to consider scheduling this appointment before leaving.

#### **PHARMACY**

Please call at least 24 hours ahead if you need prescriptions refilled. This will prevent any delay and inconvenience to you. Let us know what time you will arrive to pick up.

#### **AFTER-HOURS EMERGENCIES**

Gulf Coast Avian & Exotics provides after-hours on-call emergency service for exotic pets through our emergency service. In most cases, the doctor will return your call within 30 minutes and will aid you in determining whether your pet needs to be seen. Please be aware that the doctor is not in the building after regular business hours.

# GULF COAST AVIAN AND EXOTICS

## ABOUT THE PRACTICE

Gulf Coast Avian and Exotics is an exclusively bird and exotic pet practice staffed by Dr. Natalie Antinoff and Dr. Sue Chen. Dr. Natalie Antinoff and Dr. Sue Chen are two of approximately 100 board certified avian specialists in the country. Their patients encompass a wide variety of species including birds, reptiles, amphibians, ferrets, rabbits, hedgehogs, chinchilla, guinea pigs, rodents, and other small mammals. These patients receive 24-hour care in a separate ward to minimize stress, with housing designed to suit their specific needs. The following are among the many services provided.

## **BIRDS**

- Nutritional counseling
- Surgical or DNA sexing
- Egg binding and other reproductive disorders
- Fracture repair
- Ultrasound and fluoroscopy
- CAT scan, MRI
- Endoscopy

## **REPTILES**

- Nutritional counseling
- Environmental counseling
- Medical and surgical management of reproductive disorders
- Urinary and intestinal disorders
- Kidney biopsy
- Endoscopy
- Ultrasound, fluoroscopy, CT and MRI

## **FERRETS**

- Adrenal gland surgery
- Lupron therapy for adrenal disease
- Prostate surgery
- Surgical and medical management of insulinomas
- Heartworm disease prevention and treatment
- Chemotherapy and radiation therapy

## **RABBITS AND RODENTS**

- Oral diseases, including incisor and molar trimming, and tooth root abscesses
- Gastrointestinal disorders
- Urinary disorders
- Fracture repair
- Chemotherapy and radiation options

## ABOUT THE DOCTORS

**Dr. Natalie Antinoff** is Board Certified in Avian Practice. She completed an internship in small animal medicine and surgery, and a residency in Avian and Exotic Pet Medicine and Surgery at The Animal Medical Center in New York. She treats a wide variety of species, including birds, reptiles, amphibians, and small mammals. She has a special interest and has done her research in advanced imaging of birds, including CT and MRI. Collaboration with the other specialists already available allows diagnostic and therapeutic strategies tailored to the specific needs of birds and exotic pets.

Dr. Antinoff lectures locally, nationally, and internationally and has authored articles and chapters in professional texts and journals. She serves as a mentor for veterinarians seeking board certification. She also serves as an online consultant for veterinarians. Veterinary students spend time at Gulf Coast Avian & Exotics as part of their elective rotation. Dr. Antinoff holds memberships in the following professional organizations: Harris County Veterinary Medical Association, American Veterinary Medical Association, Texas Veterinary Medical Association, Association of Reptile and Amphibian Veterinarians, Association of Avian Veterinarians, and the American Board of Veterinary Practitioners. Dr. Antinoff was awarded the 2003 Non-Traditional Species Practitioner of the Year Award by the Texas Veterinary Medical Association.

**Dr. Sue Chen**, a native Houstonian, is Board Certified in Avian Practice. She is a graduate of Texas A&M College of Veterinary Medicine, where she created a specialized veterinary curriculum track focusing on exotic animals. She also spent time training at the National Zoo in Washington, DC, as well as Canada and Australia, where she participated in a wildlife sanctuary and a zoo. After veterinary school, Dr. Chen completed an internship at Gulf Coast Avian & Exotics, followed by a residency in Avian and Exotic Pet Medicine and Surgery at The Animal Medical Center in New York. Her current special areas of interest and research include development and testing of new heavy metal assays for birds and dental diseases in rabbits.

*Your regular veterinarian has referred you to our specialty hospital in the knowledge that your pet will receive the best care available from highly qualified veterinary avian & exotic specialists. Many techniques and instruments used are equivalent to those used on human patients. We feel fortunate to be able to offer your pet the same type of care and treatment you would want for a family member.*

*In those cases of severe injury or illness where intensive treatment is critical to your pet, it is understandable that costs can be high. We urge you to discuss with the doctor all questions regarding fees before treatment and surgery is performed. This will help you to understand the billing process and prevent any misunderstanding regarding payment for services at the time of your pet's release from the hospital.*

*Our business office staff is also available to assist you with these questions should the doctor be unavailable. We want you to have a positive experience and a healthy outcome for your pet through Gulf Coast Avian & Exotics.*