

## **Echocardiogram Info**

### Client Handout

An echocardiogram is a procedure that involves an ultrasound of the heart. This procedure allows investigation of the structure and function of cardiac chambers, valves and external structures of the heart in real time. It also allows use of colour and spectral doppler examination of blood flow through the heart and where it enters and exits.

#### **When to do an echocardiogram**

- Known or new found murmur during a vet exam
- Consistent increased breathing rate, especially while at rest
- Collapsing during walks or playtime
- Irregular heart beats
- New or chronic coughing
- Sudden paralysis or paresis
- Distended abdomen due to free fluid in the abdominal cavity
- Concern for a large heart on x-rays
- Elderly dogs or cats undergoing procedures that may exacerbate congestive heart failure (general anesthesia, fluid therapy or extended release glucocorticosteroids)
- Pre-breeding screening breeds predisposed for cardiac disease:
  - Dogs: Boxers, Cavalier King Charles Spaniel, Doberman Pinscher, Great Dane, etc.
  - Cats: Sphynx, Siamese, Maine Coon, Persian, etc.

#### **What to Expect for an Echocardiogram**

All ultrasounds will be dropped off the day of the appointment and will be triaged based on other patient scans that day. An echocardiogram lasts approximately 60-90 mins; however, your pet may not get their scan done until hours after drop off.

To improve ultrasound images your patient will have fur shaved on both sides of the chest and injectable sedation may be required. An echocardiogram is not painful and sedation is avoided as much as possible, however, sedation may be required as patients need to lay down on a table and remain still during the ultrasound. It is recommended to use oral sedation at home for both dogs and cats. Please speak to your referring veterinarian about oral sedation recommendations. It is recommended that your pet be fasted from food and water 12 hours prior to their drop off time.

Your pet will be discharged as soon as their scan is completed and based on other patient discharges. A summarized report will be provided to your referring veterinarian and an official report will be transferred to them after cardiologist review of the submitted images. This may take 1-3 days after your pet's scan is completed. No prescriptions or medication adjustments will be made on the day of the ultrasound. Please follow up with your referring veterinarian about medication adjustments.