

What to expect at my pet's Cardiology Appointment

Who Will I See During My Initial Appointment?

Overview: UW Veterinary Care is a teaching institution, and your care team includes a board-certified veterinary cardiologist, veterinary nurses (clinical technicians), veterinarians in advanced clinical training programs (residents and interns), fourth-year veterinary students, and at times, visiting veterinary students or veterinarians.

Examination: Typically, a fourth-year veterinary student will meet you at your vehicle to receive your pet. That student will review your pet's medical history and perform an initial cardiovascular physical exam under the supervision of a clinician (doctor) on the Cardiology Service. The student will then briefly review your pet's case with a cardiology clinician, who will also review your pet's medical history and perform a second physical exam. The clinician will call you to explain their initial assessment and make recommendations for an initial diagnostic plan. Together with the care team, you will decide on the best diagnostic plan for your family. New patients often need to stay with us for most of the day to allow time to complete necessary diagnostic tests.

Diagnostic Tests: For patients with heart disease, tests often include echocardiography (heart sonogram), electrocardiography (rhythm strip), radiography (x-rays) and blood and urine tests. Your pet's fur can sometimes interfere with imaging studies – if there is a compelling reason not to shave a small patch of your pet's hair, please let us know before your pet is admitted. In some cases, we may need to give your pet anti-anxiety or sedative medications to minimize their stress during the testing; we will discuss this with you at the time of the appointment.

Discharge: At discharge, the clinician and student will discuss and explain all of the diagnostic test results. **They will also make recommendations for treatment, if needed. The discussion at discharge may take longer than you might anticipate. Please plan on spending at least 15 minutes, and up to an hour, with our team discussing results, treatment, prognosis and making a plan for ongoing care.** Once finalized, we will send a detailed written report of diagnostic findings and treatment plans to you and your primary care veterinarian. After your appointment or hospital discharge, we will work with you and your referring primary care veterinarian to provide continued care. Please be sure that you have all prescribed medications for your pet before you leave.

Who are all of these people?

- **Faculty Clinicians:** Our faculty (Drs. Rebecca Stepien, Heidi Kellihan and Sonja Tjostheim) are licensed veterinarians/ACVIM specialty board-certified cardiologists who are nationally and internationally recognized experts in cardiology.
- **Technicians:** Our veterinary technicians are licensed and experienced veterinary nurses.
- **Client Services:** Our client services representatives manage patient check-in and discharge, schedule appointments and accept financial payments.

- **Cardiology Residents:** Our residents are all licensed veterinarians who have completed at least one year of advanced clinical training. They provide clinical service and teach students as part of an accredited program leading to board certification by the American College of Veterinary Internal Medicine Specialty of Cardiology.
- **Small Animal Interns:** Interns are licensed veterinarians in an accredited advanced clinical training program. They also provide clinical service and teaching.
- **Fourth-Year Medical Students:** Our fourth-year Doctor of Veterinary Medicine students rotate through hospital services to gain closely supervised clinical experience.

What Costs and Fees Should I Expect?

The initial examination fee is typically \$200-300, which includes examination by and consultation with a cardiology clinician. The range for the typical outpatient cardiac evaluation ranges from \$700 - \$1000.

Cardiac certification (OFA) examinations include a physical examination and echocardiographic examination by a board-certified cardiologist. The cost for this examination (with echocardiogram) is approximately \$600.

Common cardiac diagnostic tests include a blood pressure test, chest radiographs, electrocardiogram, 24-hour ECG monitoring, echocardiogram, and blood and urine testing.

Please don't hesitate to discuss the cost of your pet's workup if you have concerns or are unclear about the cost of the proposed diagnostic or treatment course.

Pricing current as of February 2021. Prices are subject to change.

If your pet is hospitalized, billing staff will contact you by phone to collect a deposit comprising 50% of the upper end of the estimate range provided by the Cardiology Service. Please note that for outpatient visits and hospitalized patients, the balance must be paid in full at the time of patient discharge. Charges or credits may be applied to your bill up to 10 business days after the date of discharge.

Payment methods: We accept all major credit cards, cash, check or Care Credit. Payment in full is due at the time of discharge.

Care Credit: You may apply for Care Credit at 1-800-677-0718 or www.carecredit.com (select UW Veterinary Care). If you have questions or concerns regarding using Care Credit at UWVC, please contact the reception desk at any time (608-263-7600)

