



# PRECIOUS PAWS

## Mobile Veterinary Ultrasound

### **What is an ultrasound?**

An ultrasound is a way of looking inside your pet's body with the use of sound. The machine sends sound waves into the body, listens for the echoes coming back, and then uses these echoes to form a picture on the screen. The sound waves are too high for us or our pets to hear, and produce no harmful effects as a diagnostic tool.

### **Why does my pet need an ultrasound?**

There are many reasons why your veterinarian might recommend an ultrasound. In human medicine, ultrasound is the first diagnostic imaging exam usually to be ordered. This is due to the ability to see inside the body and fully visualize each organ with great detail. In veterinary medicine, we are able to use ultrasound for the some of the following reasons:

- Bloodwork abnormalities
- Recurrent urinary tract infections
- Enlarged organs
- Unexplained weight loss
- Chronic/Acute vomiting or diarrhea
- Trauma or hemorrhage
- Cancer staging
- Fluid in the chest or abdomen
- Enlarged lymph nodes
- Collapse or shortness of breath

### **What information does an ultrasound give you?**

With the ultrasound, we are able to examine the organs in the body and we look at things like location, size, shape, texture and blood supply. Unfortunately, it does not always give us a clear picture of how well an organ is working - this may be determined by other tests such as bloodwork or additional imaging. It is not uncommon to find "masses" within an organ during an ultrasound, although many of these turn out to be normal aging changes in older pets. It cannot always be determined by ultrasound whether something is benign (non-cancerous) or malignant (cancerous). Further testing may include an ultrasound-guided aspirate (pulling cells or tissue out with a small needle), additional imaging (such as MRI or CT), or surgery. Your veterinarian will always contact you if more tests need to be performed.

### **What happens to my pet during an ultrasound?**

At Precious Paws, we care about your pet as much as you do and we want them to have a positive experience. In order to ensure your pet feels comfortable with the procedure, we will take some time to make sure your pet is relaxed. Your pet will be gently positioned on a soft, padded foam trough while they are petted. The lighting is dimmed so that the sonographer can see the screen properly, and the room is quiet so that your pet is as relaxed as possible. Most of the time, conscious/light sedation is required to relax the animal and obtain the best pictures possible. If the animal is agitated, this can cause images to be blurry and cause more stress for your pet. A water-based gel is applied to the area being scanned as the ultrasound probe is gently moved along the pet's skin.

### **Why does my pet need to be shaved?**

To obtain the best ultrasound images, good contact between the ultrasound probe and your pet's skin is necessary since sound waves don't travel through hair. Your pet will need to have the hair shaved from the area being scanned.

### **Can I be present during an ultrasound?**

Due to the size of the room and the technical aspects of performing an ultrasound exam, we do not permit owners to accompany their pet to the ultrasound room. This allows the sonographer to obtain the best images possible and focus their attention on the needs of your pet during the exam. We appreciate your understanding.

### **What do I need to do to prepare for the ultrasound?**

For abdominal/pelvic ultrasounds, your pet needs to be fasted (no food) for 8 hours prior to the scan to reduce the amount of food and gas in the gastrointestinal tract. Water can be given up to 4 hours prior to your appointment time. Gas is the ultrasound's enemy – it makes the sound waves bounce back and obscures the image. It is best not to allow your pet to urinate immediately before the ultrasound as the bladder can be better evaluated when it is full.

### **What can I expect after the exam?**

All exams will be reviewed by a board certified radiologist (a veterinarian who specializes in reading diagnostic imaging). A report will be sent to your doctor, typically within 24 to 48hrs.