



Pet Owner Information and Instructions

What is MRI and what is CT?

MRI stands for magnetic resonance imaging and CT stands for computed tomography. They are both advanced imaging modalities that have been safely used in human medicine for the last forty years and in veterinary medicine for over twenty years. Both MRI and CT are non-invasive and are not painful.

Please note, that CT is only available through BAVI at our Leesburg facility.

How does an MRI work?

Unlike X-rays and CT, MRI does not use ionizing radiation. Instead, it uses magnetic fields and pulses of radio waves to temporarily and harmlessly energize molecules in your pet's body. As they relax, these energized molecules give off a signal that's made into an image. MRI allows us to image patients in all three dimensions (transverse, coronal and sagittal) in very thin slices, giving us a remarkable representation of your pets anatomy and any pathology that is present.

How does a CT work?

You may know that an X-ray is a two-dimensional picture created from ionizing radiation. A CT scan is a three-dimensional representation of an object formed from a series of two dimensional X-rays. CT uses a rotating X-ray tube to also take very thin "slices" though an object, adding the dimension of depth.

Please note, that CT is only available through BAVI at our Leesburg facility.

Why has an MRI or CT been recommended for my pet?

MRI and CT are powerful imaging modalities. They have different applications, although there is some overlap. We rely on our knowledge to make an informed decision as to which imaging technique to use based on the patient's signalment (breed, sex, age), patient history, region to be imaged, discussion with the referring veterinarian, and, if needed, consultation with a radiologist or other specialist. A general rule of thumb is that MRI is an excellent imaging modality for soft tissue structures and CT is more useful for imaging bone. We can image areas such as the sinus cavities, skull, brain, spinal cord, intervertebral disks, abdominal organs, lungs, muscles, nerves, tendons, ligaments, and joints with much more detail than the average X-ray. The results of the MRI or CT will help your veterinarian make a definitive diagnosis and offer you the best options for treating your pet.

How do I schedule an MRI or CT?

Your veterinarian must contact us to arrange a referral. Once a referral has been arranged, you may then schedule an appointment directly with us. Appointments are scheduled in the morning Monday through Friday. If your pet is to have a MRI or CT, we will have you leave him or her with us for the day. We prefer to have patients picked up by 4:30 p.m., but if it is more convenient for you to leave your pet after hours or overnight, arrangements can be made to board them for an additional fee. If needed, you may wait during the imaging study. Please notify the receptionist when scheduling the appointment if you are planning to wait.



How should I prepare my pet for the MRI or CT?

Pets having an MRI or CT must be anesthetized so that they remain still for the exam. In preparation for general anesthesia, they should not eat after 10 p.m. the night before the exam. It is all right for them to have water available until two hours prior to their scheduled appointment time. Ask your veterinarian for instructions if your pet is on any medications.

What should I bring to the appointment?

We will ask your family veterinarian to fax us a copy of the medical record so that you do not need to be

responsible for that. However, if your family veterinarian has any X-rays that they are unable to mail to us in time for the appointment, we ask that you please bring these with you.

What should I expect during the MRI or CT?

Your pet will be anesthetized between one and one and a half hours for the imaging study. Before any anesthesia is given, we will make sure that your pet is healthy enough to undergo anesthesia. We will place an intravenous catheter and your pet will get fluids throughout the procedure. All vital signs will be carefully monitored during and after the anesthesia.

What happens to my pet after the MRI or CT?

After the MRI or CT, your pet may be disoriented and off-balance for about half an hour. We will watch your pet closely until it has recovered. Once your pet is standing and able to move around safely, we will send it home with you. Your pet may urinate a large amount after it gets home because of the fluids given during the anesthesia. Once home, it will be important to keep your pet away from stairs and furniture until it has fully recovered so that your pet does not hurt itself. Your pet should be back to normal the morning following the scan.

How do we proceed after the MRI or CT?

After the MRI or CT, the images will be read by a highly qualified board – certified veterinary radiologist. Results of the MRI or CT will be returned to your family veterinarian's office within 48 hours after the appointment.

Where are you located?

You can find directions to all our locations at www.bushvetimaging.com/contact-us.