

EMERGENCY SERVICES



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Welcome

Welcome to Veterinary Specialty Hospital of San Diego. We understand that this may be a stressful and difficult time for you. We are here to help. Please read through the information below to familiarize yourself with our emergency and admitting procedures.

Emergency Arrivals

The Veterinary Specialty Hospital's Emergency Department is open 24 hours a day. Like a human hospital, life-threatening emergencies receive priority for treatment. If your pet arrives at VSH with a life-threatening problem, we are prepared to act immediately to stabilize him/her.

Emergency Estimate

If your pet is in critical condition and requires immediate intervention, a non-itemized estimate in the amount of \$500 will be presented for your authorization of emergent care. The doctor will speak with you as soon as possible to discuss your pet's status and to recommend further treatment and testing. At that time an itemized estimate will be presented.

If you have been referred to see a specialist...

If your pet is determined by an experienced technician or doctor to be in stable condition, an emergency admitting doctor will discuss medical history, perform a thorough physical examination, and recommend initial treatment and testing. After consulting with the appropriate specialist(s), an estimate will be constructed that best approximates the cost of treatments and tests that will be performed. You will ultimately be financially responsible only for treatments and tests that have been performed. Your pet will be admitted to the hospital for initial treatment and tests and if admitted to the hospital prior to 7pm Monday through Saturday, he/she will be evaluated by a specialist the same day. If your pet arrives after 7pm, or on Sunday, our emergency doctors will consult with a specialist, initiate appropriate diagnostics and treatments, and your pet will be evaluated by the specialist on the next business day. All lifesaving treatments will be initiated as soon as necessary! Your pet will see the specialist who is on emergency duty at that time and who may not be the specific specialist that he/she has been referred to see or who has previously treated your pet. Once the specialist has evaluated your pet, they will call you to discuss your pet's condition. Our specialists may not be able to call you until very late into the evening (often up to and even after midnight). You can always call and get an update from a technician or emergency doctor.

Estimates

Once the doctor has explained all treatments and/or plans for your pet, one of the technicians will present an itemized estimate. If you have any questions regarding finances, feel free to ask. The estimate provides a range of cost that attempts to take into account the inherent unpredictability of medical diagnosis and treatment. Upon admission of your pet to the hospital, a deposit must be left that represents the lower figure in the estimate. As further treatments and tests are recommended the

estimate can be updated for you. We offer Care Credit as an optional payment plan and one of the technicians can go over the plan with you.

Admission to the Hospital

When appropriate, your pet will be admitted to the hospital and will see a specialist for evaluation and further testing. It is not predictable when the specialist will perform the assessment as emergency caseload varies daily. Once admitted to the hospital, your pet will be cared for by an attentive, caring and experienced staff and will be kept in spacious and clean conditions as the initial tests and treatments are performed (i.e. intravenous fluids, medications, x-rays).

Your Pet's Belongings

We ask that you do not leave any personal belongings (i.e. collars, leashes, blankets) with your pet. This allows us to keep pets' accommodations clean on a continuous basis.

Resuscitation Orders

All patients admitted to the intensive care unit must have orders for resuscitation in the case of cardiac or respiratory arrest. Your doctor will discuss the various options with you if your pet is being admitted to the ICU ward. If your pet is being admitted to an intermediate or general care ward and you have specific wishes for the level of resuscitation efforts that should be attempted in case of emergency, please make the doctor aware of these wishes.

Updates

You will be contacted by the specialist with pertinent information (i.e. test results, diagnoses, new treatments or tests) and may discuss costs associated with any of these changes. If your pet was admitted to the hospital for a specialist's evaluation today, the specialist will call you with an update before they leave for the day. This may be at any time of the day or night. If you have been given an indication that a test or communication will occur at a specific time, this should be regarded as a best estimate. If you would like an update on your pet's status from a technician, please call **(858) 875-7500**. If the update technician is not available on this extension, press 0 to be directed to the operator. Please tell the operator your pet's name and the doctor and a technician will provide an update. The technical staff will not be able to discuss diagnoses, prognosis, and test results specifically, but will be happy to talk to you about how your pet is doing in the hospital. If at any time your pet's condition deteriorates while in the hospital, you will be contacted immediately. Please be sure that we have an accurate phone number where you can be reached.

Visiting

Outside of special circumstances (pet undergoing or recovering from procedure, pet easily stressed or excited), you may visit your pet any time from 11am-11pm, 7 days a week. If you require other visiting hours, simply contact us so that arrangements can be made. ICU visits are limited to 15 minutes at a time; however this can be changed at any time at the discretion of the ICU technician or doctor.

Financial Updates

The emergency technician has provided you with a copy of the estimate. This estimate gives a range of prices for the services we plan to offer to enable your doctor to make appropriate medical decisions for

your pet. You are welcome to call for a financial update and one of our technicians will go over your current balance. We will contact you if your balance approaches the high end of the estimate.

Discharge Information

Once your pet is ready to go home, a doctor or technician will call you. Detailed, printed discharge instructions will be presented to you when you arrive to take your pet home. A technician will review the discharge information with you (i.e. medication, diet changes, exercise restrictions). If you have any questions, do not hesitate to ask the technician at this time.

Questions and Concerns

Once again, our hospital is open 24 hours a day, 7 days week. Please call any time with any questions. If after discharge from the hospital you think your pet's condition has worsened, please call us so that we may address the problem. If you think your pet may need a doctor's attention, please do not hesitate to return to the hospital for evaluation.

Communication with your Regular Veterinarian

Throughout your pet's stay at VSH, your regular veterinarian will receive faxed updates from our doctors. He or she will also receive copies of all laboratory tests, physical examination and diagnostic findings pertaining to your visit, as well as a copy of the discharge orders. The Veterinary Specialty Hospital strives to maintain open communication with you and your regular veterinarian throughout your pet's stay.

Thank You!

We appreciate the fact that you choose to bring your beloved animal to our facility and will do everything possible to make their time in the hospital as comfortable, and as minimally stressful as possible. We will treat your pet as though they were our own. Thank you for taking the time to read through this information. Feel free to call with any questions or comments. Your feedback is greatly appreciated.