

EXOTIC ANIMAL AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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Exotic Animal and Wildlife Service Pre Consultation and admission information for clients

Taking your pet to the vet can be a stressful time for both you and your animal. This information will hopefully allow you to minimise any unnecessary stress for all concerned. Please ask at any stage if you are unsure about the best way to proceed with your animals care.

An appointment has been made for your pet to at the Hospital for Small Animals. We are a teaching hospital and it is likely that a small number of students will be present in the consultation. Consultations are usually 20 to 40 minutes in length depending on each case. Students may be asked to take a clinical history and be involved in the discussion of your animals care. This is an opportunity for us to teach the students and means you will receive more background information on your pets' condition and be well informed to make any decisions required. Your pet will be physically examined by the Veterinary surgeon in charge of the case with some student involvement to minimise any stress to your animal.

If your pet is due to be admitted to the hospital this will be either at a specific admission consultation (which may be with a nurse) or at the initial presentation. You will be advised on the likely length of stay, any diagnostic tests we wish to perform and any possible costs involved. You will need to sign a consent form accepting this estimate and giving permission for the treatments and tests detailed on the form. This may require your pet undergoing an anaesthetic, surgery or a period of intensive care. For minor procedures we encourage patients to be seen as a day case and in some cases procedures can be performed while you wait.

There are very few drugs licensed for use in exotic animals. In many cases the drugs used in our patients will be drugs licensed for use in other animals (such as dogs and cats) or that are used in human medicine. These are vital to allow us to treat your animal effectively and you must also give your consent for these to be used. We are a teaching hospital and as part of this your animal may be photographed and videoed and this material will be used in an anonymous way for teaching purposes. Please feel free to ask if you have any concerns regarding this. Please make sure we have all of your contact details on the consent form.

We have a number of wards dedicated for exotic and rabbit patients and each patient is cared for by Veterinary surgeons, nurses and veterinary students. There is a senior Veterinary Surgeon in charge of each case and they directly oversee all care. Patients receive round the clock care and attention with a veterinary surgeon from the exotic animal and wildlife team on call every night and weekend.

We will contact you with a daily update of how your pet is doing and to discuss the day plan and any likely costs involved. Please inform us if you have a preferred time to be contacted and we will try and accommodate this as much as possible. You are welcome to visit your pet while it is staying with us, however the hospital is a busy place and it is best that visits are specifically arranged with the veterinary surgeon dealing with your pet. In many cases we will book an appointment time for you to allow us to discuss your pets' progress with you.

There is some specific information you require so you can prepare your pet for the visit.

Ferrets: Ferrets only require fasting for 6 hours prior to anaesthetic, water should continue to be offered. Ferrets should be transported in a small cat carrier. Please bring any toys and bedding for them and a supply of their usual diet. We have some standard stocks of ferret food should you forget!

Rodents and Rabbits: These should not be starved prior to bringing them to us. They have a high metabolic rate and can suffer from digestive problems. Transport them in a small cat carrier or pet carrier. Be careful they do not overheat. Providing their usual diet whilst staying with us is important, both to stimulate appetite but also to keep their bowels in order. Please bring in their usual diet (particularly favourite treats!) and any toys or bedding they are used to. We do have a number of proprietary foods and hay for use if you forget. In some cases bringing along a friendly companion can help to reduce their anxiety. There is no extra charge for this but it should be discussed with the Veterinarian beforehand. These patients are housed in dedicated quiet wards away from predator species.

Other Mammals: Starvation may be required for up to 48 hours prior to arrival if an anaesthetic is anticipated. Transport should be in a secure carrier. Please discuss any requirements with a member of the Veterinary team if you have any concerns. We try to keep the length of time a fractious animal stays with us to a minimum to reduce anxiety.

Birds of Prey: If an anaesthetic is anticipated then they should either be fed material without castings the night before and the box or aviary checked to ensure they have cast the last meal. The crop should be empty upon their arrival to the hospital. These should be brought in their transport box (ideally plastic). If available please bring your glove and hood for handling purposes. We have a number of blocks and bow perches and an indoor mews for them to be isolated. Please advise us of their typical diet as we have a number of frozen prey items that can be provided as required.

Other birds: These should not be starved prior to their arrival at the hospital. They should be transported in a suitable carry cage or cat carrier. Please bring their usual diet with you. Ideally the diet should not be changed until your bird is feeling better. We have a number of both pelleted and seed diets for longer term patients. Favourite toys can be provided as this can settle an anxious bird. Birds are isolated in quiet wards to allow them to settle in.

Reptiles and Tortoises: Starvation is not required prior to anaesthesia for lizards and tortoises. Snakes should have digested their last meal prior to arriving (typically takes 72 hours). They should be transported in a cloth bag or in a box. This should be insulated in a polystyrene box and a heat source can be provided (microwavable bean bag or hot water bottle). Be careful not to overheat or burn your pet. We have a number of dedicated enclosures for these species and we will want to get them in the warm promptly. Please advise us of your pets' usual diet. It is helpful to bring in any supplements offered as we can assess their suitability. We have a number of typically used livefood and prey items available and diets for herbivorous species.

Amphibians: Starvation is not required prior to anaesthetic. These should be brought in a small plastic tank (potentially inside a plastic bag full of water if aquatic to reduce the risk of them damaging themselves). Their usual diet should be discussed upon arrival and if possible bringing some along with your pet is ideal.

Fish: Fish should be transported in a bag of water from their pond or tank. This should be sealed and placed in a polystyrene box. Fish should be starved overnight prior to arrival to reduce the amount of waste material in the water to keep the quality high during the journey. A second bag of water should be provided for transportation home. Should an anaesthetic be required then this second bag of their tank or pond water is used for their recovery and return journey home. We try to keep the time fish are present at the hospital to a minimum to reduce stress. Please try to plan your consultation on a day where the fish can be admitted for treatment and promptly returned home later that day.

Edinburgh University is a non profit making organization which means your fees are set at a reasonable price. However it is important these are paid after the consultation or upon collection of your pet. This allows us to keep fees reduced and to invest in the future development of the service. If you have any concerns about your ability to pay the fees discussed with you please make the Veterinary surgeon aware of this as soon as possible.

We hope these notes help to make your visit as pleasant as possible.