



**Veterinary Center
& Urgent Care**

Routine and Urgent Medical Care
for Dogs, Cats and Exotic Pets

Accredited Practice, American Animal Hospital Association

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Frequently Asked Questions about your pet's referral to Dr. Bethany Jackson

Who is Dr. Bethany Jackson?

Dr. Bethany Jackson is a board certified veterinary cardiologist. She received her Doctor of Veterinary Medicine from Virginia-Maryland Regional College of Veterinary Medicine. She completed a rotating internship at The Animal Medical Center in New York City, followed by a cardiology internship and residency at MedVet Medical and Cancer Centers for Pets in Worthington, OH. She is board certified by the American College of Veterinary Internal Medicine in the sub-specialty of Cardiology.

Dr. Jackson's interest in cardiology stemmed from experience with her own dog being under the care of a veterinary cardiologist. She saw firsthand how access to specialty consultation can help to further patient care. Her goal is to provide timely, accurate, and detailed cardiology consultations to allow accurate diagnosis and treatment of cardiac disease in pets so they can live long, fulfilling lives.

Starting in June of 2014, Dr. Jackson started coming to Bishop Ranch Veterinary Center & Urgent Care monthly to provide her expertise as a Cardiologist to patients in need.

What is a veterinary cardiologist?

A veterinary cardiologist is a veterinarian who is a specialist of heart disease in animals. In order to become a board certified cardiologist, a veterinarian completes an additional 3-5 years of specialized training in cardiology after the completing the 4 years of veterinary school and 2-4 years of undergraduate training. That's up to 13 years of schooling to become a cardiology specialist. Veterinary cardiologists are trained not only in cardiac ultrasound, but also in cardiac anatomy and physiology. This extensive training helps them to know not only how to diagnose heart disease, but also the best treatments. Veterinarians that are board certified Diplomats of the American College of Veterinary Internal Medicine undergo a rigorous credentialing and testing process to obtain this distinction. Veterinary cardiologists are dedicated to the accurate diagnosis and treatment of heart disease in pets.

How do I know if my pet has heart disease?

The best way to monitor your pet for heart disease is to have regular (at least yearly) check-ups with your veterinarian. Your veterinarian may detect an abnormality on a physical examination, such as a heart murmur or irregular heart rhythm that would make them suspicious of heart disease. Signs you may notice at home could include coughing, difficulty breathing, weakness, collapsing, or exercise intolerance. If you notice any abnormal signs in your pet, they should be evaluated by your primary care veterinarian, who will determine if a cardiology consultation is needed.

What happens during an appointment?

During your pet's appointment, a complete cardiac physical examination will be performed and an echocardiogram (ultrasound of the heart) will also be completed. Your pet's medical record and past diagnostics will be reviewed, and recommendations about further testing or treatment will be made.

Depending on the consultation that has been requested by your pet's veterinarian you may be asked to come in at specific time or to drop your pet off for a couple of hours. The type and how the consultation will be scheduled will be discussed with you prior to your scheduled appointment.



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Will my pet be sedated?

In the majority of cases, sedation is not needed. If your veterinarian suspects that your pet would benefit from sedation for the examination, then they will discuss this with you first.

Will my pet's fur be shaved?

Sometimes. We always try not to shave unless necessary. In some cases shaving is necessary to obtain diagnostic quality images.

What should I bring to the appointment?

Bring your pet, a list of your pet's medications (including tablet size and how often you give the medication), and a completed cardiology history questionnaire to each appointment.

Should I give my pet their medications the morning of the appointment?

Yes. Many cardiac medications only last in the body for 8-12 hours. In order to determine if your pet is responding correctly to medications, they should be given on their regular schedule.

What does an Echocardiogram cost?

Consultation costs vary depending on the tests needed and what diagnostics have already been performed. The cost for an Echocardiogram is \$500.00; this fee does not include any additional diagnostics, or medications that may be prescribed.

How do I count my pet's respiratory rate?

Counting your pet's respiratory rate is a good at home monitoring tool for patients that have been diagnosed with advanced heart disease. You should count the rate when your pet is resting or sleeping, not after play or exercise. Each up and down movement of the chest is one breath. You should count the number of breaths in 15 seconds, and then multiply that number by four to get the breaths your pet is taking in one minute. If the breaths per minute are consistently greater than 36-40, then you should contact your veterinarian to bring your pet in for an evaluation. If the breaths per minute are greater than 60 or you notice your pet breathing with their mouth open, you should consider having your pet evaluated on an emergency basis.