

Information Sheet

Ultrasound and pregnancy diagnosis

Ultrasonic scanning is a powerful and non invasive way of examining the internal organs of your pet. Most people know about being “scanned” in hospital ,especially during pregnancy when the unborn baby is scanned to check development,position etc.

Ultrasonic scanning works by sending out a harmless sound wave into the body and collecting the echoes from the organs and structures inside and displaying these on a screen. One advantage of ultrasound over for example Xrays is that it can show us structures moving such as the heart beating. For the majority of ultrasound scans no anaesthetic or even sedation is necessary.

We use ultrasound to investigate a large number of conditions , especially in the abdominal and chest cavities where direct examination is difficult .Ultrasound is particularly good for examining bladder problems and fluid in the abdomen which interferes with X ray pictures.

Pregnancy diagnosis

Ultrasound is a very useful tool in diagnosing pregnancy. We can usually diagnose pregnancy from 4 weeks gestation in the cat and dog. It is possible to also see the heart beating in the puppies and kittens to ensure that they are alive. At the end of pregnancy we may also use ultrasound to check if there any pups or kittens left inside the mother if this is uncertain.

When we perform a pregnancy diagnosis we are unable to count the number of puppies or kittens present. This is because the ultrasound image may overlay one pup or kitten over another, and we can only scan a portion of the abdomen at one time so that puppies or kittens may be counted more than once.

If you have any queries about having your pet “scanned” please discuss them with one of the vets.