

WHAT IS VIDEO OTOSCOPY

Video otoscopy of the ears is a specialized procedure performed under general anesthesia by a veterinary dermatologist. Through the aid of an otoscope (an instrument used to look in the ears) that has a high resolution camera, video otoscopy can be used to visualize the vertical and horizontal ear canals, as well as the tympanic membrane (eardrum). The camera transmits the images to a television screen for easy visualization during the procedure and can take pictures, which can be saved for veterinarians and clients to view later.

BENEFITS OF VIDEO OTOSCOPY

Our goal for any video otoscopy is to better assess any abnormalities within the ear that could be contributing to ear infections, ear pain or other ear problems. Typical hand held otoscopes used for routine ear exams are limited in their diagnostic capacity. With the aid of the camera and light, video otoscopes allow us to see further into the canal and get a more detailed view. Additionally, video otoscopes have an opening through which the ear can be flushed to help remove debris that may be blocking our view of important structures, foreign bodies, masses, or other abnormalities within the ear. Instruments can also enter through this channel and can then be used to grab objects. Instruments can also be used to sample, debulk, or sometimes even remove masses within the ear that would be difficult to reach otherwise. Biopsy samples obtained from masses can be sent to the lab for histopathologic evaluation to determine the type of mass present, which is helpful in developing the best treatment options and prognosis.

If there is evidence of middle ear disease (disease behind the ear drum), the use of a video otoscope allows us to perform a procedure called a myringotomy, or a medically induced rupture of the tympanic membrane. This procedure allows us to obtain samples for culture and thoroughly flush behind the eardrum, which is therapeutic. The tympanic membrane usually heals within a month, though sometimes can take longer to heal if it is damaged or inflamed, and rarely may not heal completely.

WHAT TO EXPECT AFTER THE PROCEDURE

Overall, video otoscopy is a very safe procedure, and side effects are uncommon. Your pet may be a little less energetic for 24 hours following anesthesia. Your pet may also experience some discomfort and/or head shaking. However, it is our goal with every procedure to make sure your pet is comfortable by providing appropriate pain management prior, during, and after the video otoscopy. Rare side effects include decreased hearing, facial paralysis, and problems with balance. These side effects are usually transient and resolve with time. Your veterinary dermatologist will go over the results, answer any questions, as well as determine a long-term plan for managing your pet's ear disease following the procedure.