

# What to Expect: General Diagnostic and Surgical Service

Thank you for selecting the Hospital for Large Animals at Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine and making an appointment with the General Diagnostic and Surgical Service. We are looking forward to meeting you and your horse! Our service sees many varieties of cases and can offer all types of diagnostic procedures—from nerve blocks to tissue biopsy to CT and MRI—as well as performs surgery. Board certified surgeons, Dr. Thomas Jenei and Dr. Carl Kirker-Head, run the service. As Tufts is a teaching institution, senior year students are involved in all phases of the initial visit, including obtaining a history and performing a physical examination, as well as discussing how we may best meet your and your animal's needs. All surgery is performed by the faculty surgeon, with assistance of a surgical house officer who is also a graduate veterinarian. Hospitalized patients are cared for under the direct supervision of the faculty veterinarian. Caregivers include a knowledgeable team of technicians, senior veterinary students, house officers, and attending faculty. Using this team approach we are able to provide 24-hour quality care.

## Preparing for Your Appointment

- When possible, please bring copies of any recent lab work, images, or other tests that your horse may have had done recently or that you feel are relevant (e.g. video tape of a performance) to your horse's current problem. We also welcome your own veterinarian to join us for any or all parts of your horse's evaluation and treatment.
- If your appointment is for a lameness evaluation and your horse is currently on medication please discuss with your own veterinarian or the intended attending faculty veterinarian whether or not the medication should be stopped in advance of the scheduled appointment. Please do the same if your horse is currently receiving antibiotics for the problem for which it is to be seen. Also, please bring your tack to exercise, ride, or drive your horse if it is to be examined for lameness. In many instances this can be quite helpful in the evaluation process.
- If your horse is coming for a lameness evaluation please check with us in advance before having new shoes placed, as we need to pull shoes for some exams (such as MRI).
- Directions to the hospital can be obtained through our main website at [vet.tufts.edu/directions](http://vet.tufts.edu/directions). These are trailer friendly.
- If you anticipate that your horse will remain in the hospital for the night or a longer period of stay please supply a feed chart (what and how much he or she is currently eating). The hospital carries a variety of Nutrena grain products as well as oats, beet pulp, hay stretcher, and alfalfa pellets. If you would like to supply his or her own grain, supplements, or treats, this is no problem but we request that you package the grain/supplements into labeled, individual portions. In addition, we provide high quality grass/timothy mixed hay that the majority of our patients eat quite well. As storing sufficient quantities of owner-provided hay is difficult, we encourage you to consider our stock.
- Prior to arrival, please check with hospital staff about bringing medications to be left and administered by hospital staff. There is a hospital pharmacy policy, which prevents the use of outside medications. Depending on the medication, this can sometimes be waived.
- The hospital stays relatively warm at night, even during the winter months. Most unclipped horses are comfortable without blanketing. If your horse is body clipped you may want to bring his or her labeled, lightweight stable blanket.
- If your horse is insured, please be sure to follow your policy guidelines in regards to what conditions the insurance company needs to be contacted for. It is very helpful to have the number of your agent and the policy number if you are bringing your horse to the hospital with an emergency condition.
- Please be sure to pack along anything else that you think is either important to the evaluation or important to your horse during his or her stay, for example a cribbing collar or bell boots. It is always wise to have everything labeled so it does not become misplaced!

## Contact Information

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**HLA Front Desk**  
508-839-7926

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- If you cannot be in attendance at your horse's appointment, you can arrange to speak to the attending clinician in advance and meet with him or her after the appointment. Findings during the course of the appointment can also be shared with you over the phone.
- Horses can be dropped off the night before or the morning of their appointment to help with shipping arrangements or work schedules.
- Trailers can be parked and left at Tufts University while your horse is hospitalized.
- There is a cafeteria available at the Agnes Varis Campus Center Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

### Arrival at the Hospital

- Once you have arrived and have parked in our large animal parking lot, please come in the main entrance of the building to complete the registration process before unloading your horse. This will allow hospital staff to help you unload and get into the building. Restrooms are also available inside, as well as water, coffee, and tea.
- We have manure buckets available for use and can assist you with finding your horse a drink of water.

### Visiting Hours

- Our large animal hospital visiting hours are 11:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Monday through Friday, and 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. on weekends and holidays. Although we realize that it is very tempting to visit the rest of the patients, we request that you stay with your own horse. Also due to health regulations we cannot permit you eat or drink in the hospital wards. You are welcome to do so in our waiting room, outside, or in our cafeteria.

### Discharge from the Hospital

- If your horse has a day-only appointment, the attending clinician or house officer will work with the senior student in generating a report which summarizes the presenting history, the evaluation findings and available diagnostic results, and treatment recommendations. Depending on the length of your drive or the time of the day, you may find it preferable to have the discharge summary faxed or

emailed after it is completed. If indicated, you may also purchase medications and or bandaging materials from the Hospital for Large Animals. You may also obtain copies of diagnostic images, although sometimes these cannot be provided until 1-2 business days later. Your referring veterinarian will receive a copy of the discharge summary as well, to ensure that he or she is kept up to date. Discharge summaries for horses that have been hospitalized are generally lengthier, but are usually available at the time of discharge unless diagnostics are being done right up until the time of discharge. Again, your veterinarian will receive a copy of the report. We encourage you to read your discharge summary closely and ask us to clarify areas where you have questions or concerns. In addition, please remember to take home anything that you brought with you or had left with your horse.

### Scheduling

- Appointments can be made for our service by calling the Hospital for Large Animals front desk at 508-839-7926 between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. You will be offered the first available appointment that also facilitates access to the diagnostic services that your horse may need as well as anesthesia/surgery if this is a potential. As schedule openings in many of the diagnostic services is on a first come first serve basis, it is generally easier to cancel an appointment than it is to get one once you are at the hospital.

If you find that you are unable to keep an already scheduled appointment, please be thoughtful and call us to cancel it or schedule a more suitable time.

### Payment

- Payment in full is expected at the time of discharge for day appointments. For those horses that will be hospitalized, you will be provided an estimate in writing and are expected to leave a deposit of 75% of the estimate. Care Credit financing is available and hospital staff can direct interested parties in obtaining it.

In general, estimates are made based on the anticipated course of events and do not include costs associated with additional tests, unanticipated complications, unanticipated findings, and so on. Costs not included in the estimate are still your responsibility. If your horse is hospitalized we welcome frequent questions about the status.

*We appreciate the opportunity to provide services for you and your horse!*