



Animal Specialty Hospital of Florida

Exceptionally skilled. Uniquely compassionate.

F.A.Q.s about the Cardiology Service:

Nick Schroeder, DVM DACVIM (cardiology)

How do I get an appointment with Dr. Schroeder?

Dr. Schroeder works on a referral basis. What this means is that your regular veterinarian must authorize us to see you and your pet. Please contact our front desk or receptionists, and they will be happy to facilitate this process for you.

Do I need to do anything before the appointment?

Please bring a copy of your pet's medical record, including any test results, x-rays, etc. If your veterinarian has indicated that they will fax us the records, please verify receipt of these records prior to your appointment. Most of the time, it is not necessary for a pet to be fasted prior to the consultation. If your pet is taking medication for their particular condition, it is generally advised that they receive their medication in the morning like usual. If you have any specific questions, please do not hesitate to call and check with our receptionists. If they are unable to answer your question, then they will check with the Cardiology assistant, Diana.

What is going to happen when I come to my appointment?

When you come in you will be greeted by the receptionists at the front desk. Give your name and your pet's name, and we will sign you in. If you already haven't filled out an information sheet, you will be asked to do so at that time. If this is your first appointment with Dr. Schroeder, **please make every effort to arrive at least 30 minutes prior to your scheduled appointment time.** This gives us time to enter all the necessary information into our system and allows Dr. Schroeder to review all pertinent medical records. We try to make every effort for you to be in the examination room at the scheduled appointment time. Of course, emergencies arise and you may occasionally be asked to wait a few minutes up front. Dr. Schroeder's appointments typically last an hour. We ask that you do not bring other pets with you to the appointment, as it tends to be a distraction. We also ask that you please turn your cellular phones off. Bring a light jacket, as it tends to be cold in the examination room.

Once you get into the examination room, one of the veterinarians on Dr. Schroeder's service will briefly take a history and perform a physical examination. Dr. Schroeder will then meet with you, perform a complete physical examination, review the pertinent medical records with you and discuss your options for further diagnostics and treatment when necessary. You will receive a written estimate that includes the cost of the consultation and any diagnostic tests, therapeutic procedures, etc. to authorize before anything is done. If your pet has had an ultrasound, we will likely have to repeat it. Echocardiography is a user-dependent test that is best evaluated in real-time (not on disc from still images and a few loops). If your pet has had a recent

echocardiogram *performed* by (not just reviewed by) a board-certified veterinary cardiologist, Dr. Schroeder will not need to repeat it.

If your pet requires further testing, it will be done so at your appointment time whenever possible. You will then meet with Dr. Schroeder again to discuss the results, possible treatment plans, etc.

If your pet requires medical therapy, you will receive a drug sheet that contains information about the particular medications that are being prescribed. This includes directions for use, side-effects and possible drug interactions. You will also receive a copy of test results for your own records (i.e. the echocardiogram report).

Will my pet need to be sedated for testing?

Typically not. It is very uncommon that we require sedation for simple testing including bloodwork, x-rays, echocardiography/ultrasound. Tests that require sedation and/or anesthesia will be discussed with you in advance, and typically set-up as a drop-off. For standard x-rays or echocardiography, patients are gently restrained on their side on a special examination table. Patients that cannot be briefly supported on their backs for chest x-rays for whatever reason will be placed right-side-up (sternally). Patients that may bite are muzzled for everyone's safety. An ultrasound examination takes approximately 10-15 minutes, and x-rays usually take about 5-10 minutes.

What about follow-up visits for rechecks?

We will schedule rechecks as deemed necessary. If it has been more than a couple of months since your last recheck, please verify all your pertinent information (address, telephone numbers, referring veterinarian information, etc.) with the receptionist prior to your appointment.

Will my regular veterinarian be kept informed?

Absolutely. It is Dr. Schroeder's mission to keep your regular veterinarian fully informed and up-to-date on every case he sees. Typically, a summary letter is faxed and sent to your veterinarian the very same day as your appointment. Your regular veterinarian will be updated after every recheck and hospitalization as well. All reports on testing performed by Dr. Schroeder as well as the results of bloodwork or other laboratory testing will be provided to your veterinarian.

What if my pet is having an emergency?

Please call the front desk, and let them know the nature of your pet's emergency (i.e. difficulty breathing, passing out or fainting, etc.) and bring them in immediately. Your pet will be immediately triaged, and taken to the ICU if they appear unstable upon arrival. If your pet is having labored breathing, please allow us to bring the pet to ICU, as at least temporary placement in the oxygen cage may be necessary. An emergency veterinarian will meet with you and discuss what needs to be done. The emergency veterinarians always contact Dr. Schroeder if one of his patients comes in on emergency. If your pet has not seen Dr. Schroeder previously, but your regular veterinarian requested that they be transferred to the Cardiology service, then the emergency veterinarian will hospitalize your pet, and they will be evaluated by Dr. Schroeder usually the next morning. If it is during normal business hours, and Dr. Schroeder's schedule is full, you will need to come in through emergency.

Can my regular veterinarian provide follow-up care for my pet?

Absolutely. Simple follow-up testing such as bloodwork may be performed by your regular veterinarian. Have them fax Dr. Schroeder the results, and we can work with your regular veterinarian to guide medical therapy, etc. More advanced follow-up testing (recheck echocardiography, sometimes x-rays) may be best performed at Dr. Schroeder's office, and we will discuss when we need to do this.

Can I bring my pet to Dr. Schroeder for routine veterinary care?

No. Your regular veterinarian is absolutely the *best* person to handle routine veterinary care. This includes spay/neuter/declaw procedures, vaccinations, and diagnosis/treatment of *non* heart or lung-related problems (i.e. skin infections, urinary problems, etc.). Heartworm preventative and prescription diets are typically provided by your regular veterinarian as well.

Is Dr. Schroeder available for phone or telemedicine consultations?

No. The best way to evaluate patients is with a complete physical examination, which cannot be performed over the phone. If your veterinarian has questions for Dr. Schroeder regarding a particular pet, they are welcome to give him a call.

What is the best way to get a hold of Dr. Schroeder?

If you need to leave Dr. Schroeder a message, please call the front desk and ask to be transferred to Dr. Schroeder's voicemail. Please leave your name, your pet's name, your message and a number where we can reach you after 4 PM Monday-Thursday and after noon on Fridays. We will make every effort to return your call that day. If it is after hours, or on a weekend, then we will return the phone call then next business day. Diana, one of the veterinarians on the Cardiology service or Dr. Schroeder himself will return your call. Please do not leave multiple messages – if your pet is having an emergency, bring them in immediately on emergency. Dr. Schroeder sees appointments all day long, and is frequently dealing with hospitalized patients. We usually don't get to messages until later in the afternoon. You may email the hospital's website, but bear in mind Dr. Schroeder typically doesn't receive emails until a few days later. Voicemail works the best.

My pet is being treated for congestive heart failure. Is it safe to still vaccinate my pet, continue heartworm preventative, flea/tick medications, and vitamin or joint supplements?

Generally, **yes**. However, if patients have active heart failure and are sick, we generally recommend delaying vaccinations until they are doing well for at least a month or two on cardiac medications. We are obligated by law to continue vaccinating dogs and cats for rabies. Patients that are too sick for a vaccination may have their blood tested to see if they have adequate antibody titers for protection against the rabies virus. This test may be performed by your regular veterinarian, and the blood is sent to the lab at Kansas State University. Most boarding facilities require vaccination for *Bordetella*.

Heartworm preventative is absolutely safe and recommended for patients being treated for congestive heart failure. Mosquitoes are present in South Florida year round, and even dogs with heart failure may be infected with heartworms. **DO NOT STOP GIVING HEARTWORM PREVENTATIVE.**

Flea and tick medications are generally safe for patients with congestive heart failure. Ask your regular veterinarian which preparations will work best for your pet.

Vitamins and joint supplements are generally safe for patients with congestive heart failure. Ask your regular veterinarian which products they recommend.