



VCSG

Veterinary Care & Specialty Group

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**Rehabilitation
Physical Therapy
Call VCSG for
details.**

**Journal Club
Wednesday
November 4
8:30 a.m.
Dr. Jeffrey Peck**

**Nutrition and nutraceuticals in
the changing management
of osteoarthritis
for dogs and cats
See our website for details.**

Cervical Disc Arthroplasty (CDA) by Christiane Massicotte DVM, MS, PhD, Diplomate, ACVIM (Neurology)

Cervical disc arthroplasty is a safe and effective surgical technique used in the treatment of disc associated Wobbler syndrome and cervical type II herniated disc, which is less invasive than traditional surgery. CDA is now available at VCSG. CDA can be planned on an outpatient basis and results in rapid post-surgical recovery. The long-term success rate associated with CDA is 91% or above.

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Vader's Friends of the Month



Vader Pullen



Obie



Georgia

Ask the Vet: Internists and Cardiologists and Neurologists, Oh My!

Denise Radford, DVM Emergency Veterinarian, VCSG

Seventeen years ago, I took my first job in Veterinary Medicine. I was a kennel attendant, and my days were filled with bathing pets, trimming nails, snuggling animals that missed their people, and cleaning. Lots of cleaning! Knowing I wanted to be a Veterinarian when I grew up, I eagerly anticipated my cleaning duties, because they often put me in the same room as the Vet and their medical team. I could listen and learn. My mind raced, and I kept a notebook in the breakroom where I jotted down things to look up later. There are kids out there who have always wanted to be veterinarians and are doing the same thing now with only one major difference. They hear the word "referral" a lot more than I did.

Back then, the closest referral center was over three hours from the veterinary hospital in which I worked. The combination of advances in human medical care, veterinarians eager to move the needle on what can be done to help pets, and people who love their pets like they are family have created the need for board certified



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specialists. And so, "referral" has become a much more common word. Chattanooga and its surrounding areas are immensely lucky to have Veterinary Care and Specialty Group located at the base of one of our area's most picturesque mountains. The "referral" isn't so far away or scary, after all.

There are a couple of ways in which your primary veterinarian may send you to see us at VCSG. First would be for a classic referral appointment. This method is for the times when your pet has a long-term problem or a problem that is very slowly worsening or becoming more frequent, but is not enormously time sensitive. In this case, your vet will fill out all sorts of paperwork to tell us as much information as they can about your pet. Once it is submitted to us, we will figure out which specialist would be the most beneficial for you to see. Then, you will be contacted by Kaitlin, our referral coordinator, to schedule an appointment.

In my experience, this is when owners sometimes start to get anxious about going for referral. Rightfully so - you're headed to a new place with new people! After all, anything unfamiliar is a little nerve-wracking. I have worked as a primary care veterinarian for years, and my advice to owners is twofold. First, if your trusted veterinarian has offered you referral, rest assured that they have your pet's best interests at heart. Secondly, don't dwell on what's to come next. Just because you go to see the specialist doesn't mean you have committed to a lifetime's worth of treatment. Hearing what they have to say is often a blessing and can provide clarity, like fog lifting from a curvy road.

The second way your vet may send you to see a specialist is through the ER. As you know, our ER is open and fully staffed with ER doctors, vet nurses, and support staff 24/7/365. You can choose to see us in the ER any time, any day. At some point, you may go to your primary care veterinarian and, after examination, they may say, "I think you should go to the ER." In this case, worry not, drive safely, and remain calm. Next, I'll explain the most common reasons for referral this way.

First, your vet may suspect that your pet needs an urgent test or a treatment that they cannot offer. For example, things like clotting disorders, loss of mobility of limbs, and snake bites often require machines and supplies that primary care veterinarians don't have. Since the breadth of veterinary medicine has grown so much in the last 20 years, it is virtually impossible for your amazing primary care vet to have everything. In these cases, you can always call ahead to tell us the nature of your emergency. When you arrive, you'll be greeted by the reception team, you'll be put into an exam room, and your pet will be well on its way to being assessed by an ER doctor. Next, your vet may know your pet needs to see a

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specialist and may think it is in your pet's best interest to be hospitalized with care until that appointment can occur. Finally, your vet may offer this when they know that your pet needs more than 12 hours of continuous care with supervision, such as overnight or over the weekend. Your vet is probably a superhero, but even superheroes occasionally have to sleep!

As a primary care veterinarian, the very first time I referred a patient was because I thought she needed an ultrasound of her liver. At that time, the closest referral hospital was two hours away. The client was quite hesitant since "Macy" was acting fine, but I managed to convince him it was in his pet's best interest. The internist who performed the ultrasound on the little pug a week later found a liver abnormality. As a team - the veterinary internist, the owner and I were able to get ahead of it with a plan that greatly increased little Macy's quality and length of life. Another time, I sent a very sick puppy that had eaten gum with xylitol in it to receive 24/7 care. I had been having to supplement his blood sugar at my hospital all day, and I didn't think he'd make it through the night without someone carefully monitoring him every minute. I remember the joy I felt and the gratitude on the owner's face when the little puppy bounced through the door, alive and well, for his last puppy vaccinations.

Just a few weeks ago, a client said to me, "Cats have Cardiologists?!" The answer was, "Why, yes, they do!" VCSG is proud to offer specialists in many departments including Internal Medicine, Critical Care, Orthopedic Surgery, Soft Tissue Surgery, Neurology, Cardiology, Oncology, and Rehabilitation/Physical Therapy. So, whether you end up with us at VCSG on your own accord because your dog just ate a sock, or you do so after careful consideration with your veterinarian because your cat needs an MRI, the moral of the story will remain the same. Referral doesn't have to be scary, because we treat your pets like the valued family members they are.....24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year!

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Multiple biomechanical studies showed the superiority of CDA compared with standard surgical decompression methods as it provides distraction at the same time as maintains intervertebral joint mobility and preventing domino effects or stress on adjacent intervertebral disc spaces. CDA is suitable for medium and large dogs over 23Kg. CDA is not recommended when there are ongoing vertebral diseases, prolonged history of non-ambulation, very severe neurological deficits or concurrent dorsal spinal compression. These dogs also must be above 23Kg to have a successful outcome.

Post-operative radiographs are taken at 2 weeks, 3 months, 6 months, 1 year and 2 years after the procedure has been completed. Radiographs evaluate implant position and subsequently rare complications such as subsidence, ventral osteophytes, migration and infections. Optimal implant position should be centered in lateral and VD views and achieve a relative distraction ratio between 1.7 and 2.

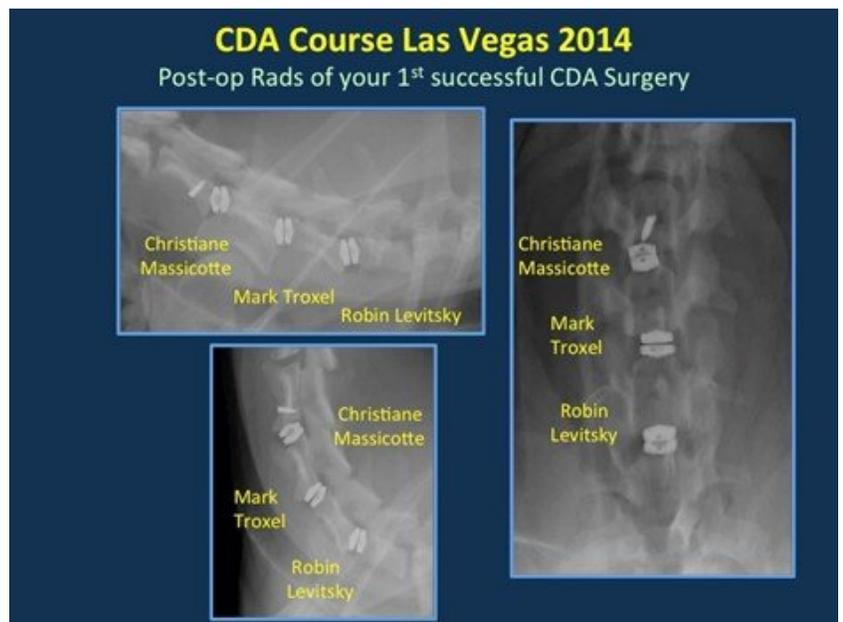
Cases undergoing CDA should be selected carefully to meet all criteria required for its successful outcome with the latest generation of implants. Early intervention is also encouraged to get the most rapid post-surgical recovery and the best long-term success rate.



Cervical Disc Implants



Different sizes of cervical disc implants





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More Friends of Vader



Merit



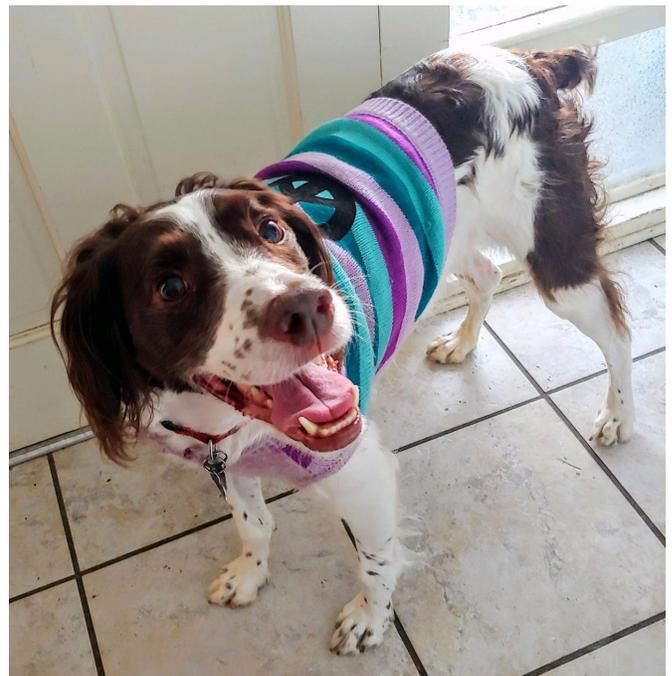
Cheddar



Harry



Max



Hobie