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MINIMALLY INVASIVE MEDICINE – NOW FOR PETS TOO

May 6, 2011 (Southfield, Mich.) – Considered the gold standard for humans for the last 20 years, minimally invasive medicine is now being used to treat conditions in dogs and cats by universities and some specialty veterinary hospitals like Michigan Veterinary Specialists (one of a few hospitals in Michigan that have the equipment and training necessary to perform these procedures).

As human medicine continues to advance with procedures such as arthroscopic surgery to repair damage to knees, angioplasty for coronary artery disease, and laparoscopic surgery to the abdomen, so follows veterinary medicine. Minimally invasive surgery in pets offers the same benefits as in humans:

- Shorter anesthesia and surgery time
- Less pain, leading to less pain medication needed
- Minimal scarring and quicker recovery
- Lower risks than with open surgery (e.g. infection, hemorrhaging, mortality)
- Patient can go home on the day of the procedure

But one of the best things about minimally invasive medicine is that dogs and cats can now be treated for conditions that were previously untreatable or in which the surgery required would itself be life-threatening (such as open heart surgery).

“It’s exciting that what has been so transformative in human medicine is now being applied to veterinary medicine. Now pets can get well, faster and with less pain,” said Dr. Sarah Achen, a board-certified veterinary cardiologist at Michigan Veterinary Specialists.

Diagnostic tools such as CT scans, MRI and digital radiography can be used in minimally invasive medicine but the technique most frequently used is called fluoroscopy. It is done using a sophisticated machine that takes x-rays at a speed of up to 30 times per second creating real-time video of the patient’s internal landscape. Fluoroscopy is used in many minimally invasive procedures including bone biopsies, treatment of congenital heart defects, and treatment of tracheal collapse.

Arthroscopy and laparoscopy – other minimally invasive techniques – allow the surgeon to make one or more mini cuts the size of a keyhole through which a tiny camera is inserted to see what is going on inside. Often times, the surgeon is able to repair the damage then and there.

About MVS

Founded in 1990, Michigan Veterinary Specialists is the specialty and emergency medical center of choice for tens of thousands of pet owners and their primary care veterinarians. Similar to human medicine, they work in partnership with a pet’s primary care veterinarian—through a referral system—to manage the pet’s health. A primary care veterinarian may recommend a specialist if the pet is presenting symptoms or conditions that require specialized diagnostic evaluation or treatment in areas such as Ophthalmology, Cardiology, Neurology, Dermatology, Radiology, Internal Medicine, Surgery, Oncology and Emergency/Critical Care. Michigan

Veterinary Specialists has three hospitals in Michigan—Southfield, Auburn Hills and Grand Rapids. For more information, visit www.michvet.com

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