

# BluePearl PetLife

Your Guide to Exceptional ER + Specialty Care for Your Pet

(What is a veterinary specialist, anyway?)

- + 3 common pet emergencies
- + What to expect during an ER visit
- + Answers to your top questions

 BluePearl<sup>™</sup>  
Pet Hospital

## > INTRODUCTION



We're sorry your pet's not well, but you couldn't have come to a better place

**W**elcome to BluePearl Pet Hospital, where we're elevating the standard of veterinary medicine and united in our passion for pet care.

We recognize that you're concerned about your pet's condition, what treatment might look like, and managing the cost of care. You can rest assured we care about your pet's health as much as you do. Count on our team for open and honest communication about all aspects of treatment, including cost and payment options. We want you to focus on what's most important—being there for your pet.

This magazine is designed to demystify the specialty and emergency veterinary care experience. You'll benefit from useful information, including who we are, the treatment process, and answers to frequently asked questions.

You'll also find heartwarming stories from other owners like you—folks who've triumphed over pet health challenges. Their accounts highlight the resilience of our clients and patients, the astounding depth of the human-animal bond, and the mutual gratitude between pet owners and care teams. They will help assure you that you've made the right decision to trust us with your pet's advanced medical needs.

BluePearl teams are not just providers; we are pet owners and animal lovers who relate to the deep connection you share with your pet. This empathy guides our approach, ensuring we treat each pet as if they were our own. Whether it's an urgent health issue or a complex case requiring specialists, we rise to the challenge with compassion, expertise and respect.

Thank you for choosing BluePearl. We're here to assist you in any way and committed to providing the exceptional care your pet deserves.

—The BluePearl team



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# All about BluePearl

**W**e are a national network of specialty and emergency hospitals throughout the United States that continues to expand. Our teams are united in a shared passion for animals and dedication to elevating the veterinary industry so pets receive the best care when they need it most.

Most of our hospitals are open 24 hours a day, every day. They are staffed with specialists and experienced emergency veterinarians. Together with nurses, assistants, technicians and client care teams, we set the bar for world-class, sustainable veterinary care through:

- **Innovative techniques**
- **Advanced diagnostics**
- **Comprehensive care**
- **Training the next generation of vets**
- **Advancing veterinary science**

## Serving our communities

BluePearl's commitment to veterinary health is anything but routine. We consider ourselves servant leaders, compelled to help our communities help as many pets in as many ways as possible.

## Making veterinary care accessible to all

BluePearl Cares is our 501(c)(3) charitable arm that expands emergency and specialty care to pet owners in underserved communities. Our BluePearl Cares Care Teams travel to rural areas, veterinary deserts and urban centers to serve pets in need. We are supported solely by donations from kind humans who believe in helping vulnerable animals when they need it most. Help us say "Yes" to more pets. Donate at [bluepearlveterinary.com/bluepearl-cares](https://bluepearlveterinary.com/bluepearl-cares).

## Giving the gift of life

Like humans, dogs and cats need blood transfusions—but there is a dire shortage of donors. BluePearl is proactively addressing this problem by building a national supply network. The donor process is safe, comfortable and free. See page 25 for details or visit [bluepearlveterinary.com/blood-bank](https://bluepearlveterinary.com/blood-bank) to learn how to make your pet a hero.

## Offering end-of-life care

BluePearl is dedicated to improving quality of life for pets at every stage. Our Pet Hospice makes every pet's end-of-life experience as meaningful as the life they've lived. We support patients and their owners from diagnosis or decline to euthanasia and professional grief support. Visit [pethospice.bluepearlveterinary.com](https://pethospice.bluepearlveterinary.com) to learn more.

We've come a long way from our beginnings as a single practice in Tampa, Florida in 1996. **A BETTER WORLD FOR PETS** is Mars Petcare's Purpose, and as an affiliate, it's our goal, too. 



Scan to learn more about our history and growth on our website.

# Who's Who

Here are some of the BluePearl team members you may meet at our hospitals.



## Client Service Associates

The faces of our practice, these frontline team members ensure you and your pet get the care and attention needed. They juggle many responsibilities, including greeting, providing regular updates, and checking out patients.



## Veterinary Technicians + Assistants

These veterinary professionals work alongside our doctors to provide a range of skilled services such as emergency first aid, nursing care, exams, surgery assistance and lab work.



## Veterinarians

Our doctors have graduated from accredited veterinary colleges, internships and residencies. Most are board-certified in a specialty or actively working through that lengthy process toward that goal.



## Practice Management Team

Overseeing day-to-day operations, these leaders guide the medical and client service teams. They are happy to assist if you have a concern.



## Kennel Assistants

These essential team members are responsible for keeping an eye on our patients, making sure they are comfortable, clean, fed and watered.



## Hospital Operation Leaders

These experienced leaders oversee the hospital's business and operational success, ensuring smooth running and efficiency.

## 3 common pet emergencies— and how to help

Acting quickly in an emergency may save your pet's life.

**Y**ou're enjoying a quiet evening at home when suddenly your pet shows signs of distress. What do you do? Knowing how to recognize and respond to veterinary emergencies is crucial for any pet owner. We cover three common ones here—vehicular trauma, acute vomiting and heat stroke—to help you act quickly and decisively if they happen to your pet.

No matter the situation, we strongly encourage you to keep your family veterinarian's number in your phone, along with your local BluePearl emergency hospital info. When in doubt, make the call. Early intervention can save your pet's life.

### Hit by a car

Knowing what to do if your pet (or another animal) is hit by a vehicle can make an enormous difference in the outcome. In this traumatic and upsetting situation, it's vital to keep your emotions in check. The calmer you are, the more rational decisions you'll make and the faster you're likely to seek care. Animals also sense our emotions,

so staying calm can keep their panic level from escalating.

Be extremely careful when moving, handling or touching your dog or cat. When traumatized and in pain, even a gentle pet can become defensive, aggressive—and even bite. If possible, keep your hands away from the pet's head and mouth while handling. Use a blanket or towel to help move them if necessary and isolate them, if the situation allows, in a crate to help them avoid further injury.

If the driver who struck your pet is present, get as much information as calmly as possible. The

more details you can give your emergency vet, the easier it will be for them to make treatment decisions. Do keep in mind, though, that drivers are not obligated by law to pay for vet bills.

When examining your pet, remember that while external wounds may be obvious, internal injury may not. Animals are tough and may hide their pain. Even if your pet doesn't seem to be in obvious distress, it's always wise to get to an emergency pet hospital right away. BluePearl's highly skilled doctors and staff stand ready to deliver exceptional care when it matters most.



## Acute vomiting

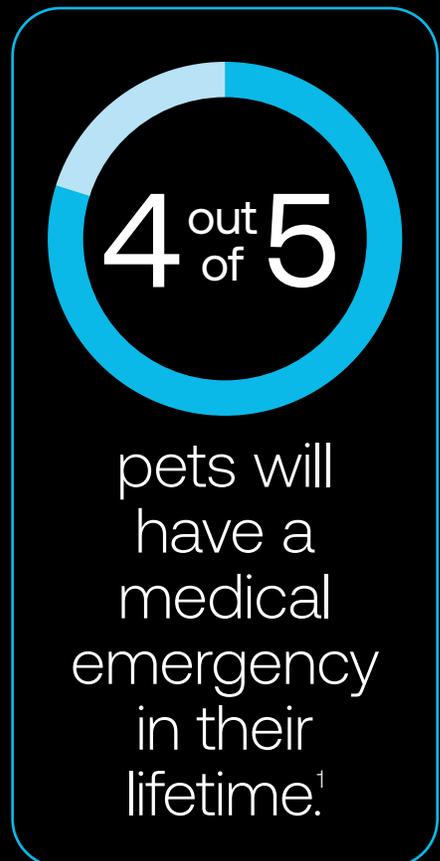
Cats and dogs vomit for many reasons, from eating something that didn't agree with them to a serious illness. One cause that warrants emergency veterinary care is foreign body obstruction. This occurs when the gastrointestinal (GI) tract becomes blocked by something your pet ingested. This is a common cause of acute vomiting in young pets if they play with items that are small or easily unraveled.

Pets experiencing foreign body obstruction may also refuse to eat or drink, seem depressed or experience abdominal pain. Signs include crying, refusing to lie down, or assuming a hunched position. Foreign body obstruction is an emergency that sometimes requires both medical and surgical intervention. Fortunately, BluePearl's surgeons and specialists have the experience and technical capabilities to help.

Gastroenteritis, marked by sudden vomiting and diarrhea in pets, is another common reason pets vomit. It's typically caused by GI tract inflammation, irritation or infection. Acute gastroenteritis can result from dietary indiscretion, an intestinal parasite or intolerance to a substance your pet ingested.

Some animals with gastroenteritis recover on their own, while others require outpatient or in-hospital care. Because treatment depends on the situation, it's vital to seek an accurate diagnosis.

Pancreatitis, another cause of vomiting, refers to inflammation of the pancreas, a glandular organ that secretes enzymes that aid digestion. Inflammation can be linked to food intolerance, genetic predisposition, reaction to a medication, traumatic injury, systemic illness, or the result of another gastrointestinal disease.



<sup>1</sup>Pets Best claims data 2015-3/31/2020 for unexpected medical care.

CONT'D

## EMERGENCY CARE



Pancreatitis can be acute or chronic, and many animals have recurrent flare-ups. In cats, it is more likely to be idiopathic (unknown cause).

Other reasons for vomiting include illness unrelated to the GI system. With so many causes, deciding when to seek veterinary care can be difficult. Here's a good rule: If your dog or cat vomits multiple times in one day, or for two or more days, call your family veterinarian. Vomiting accompanied by any of these signs may signal an emergency:

- Loss of appetite
- Increased or decreased thirst or urination
- Blood in vomit or stool
- Lethargy
- Diarrhea
- Collapse
- Pale or white gums
- Abdominal pain
- Weight loss

If you see these signs, call or visit your nearest BluePearl emergency veterinary team. Our experts are

highly trained to diagnose and treat even the most complex cases.

### Heat stroke

Unfortunately, BluePearl hospitals have seen too many animals die from heat-related illness. This life-threatening condition occurs when a pet can't keep its core temperature in a safe range. Unlike humans, pets don't sweat, so they can feel the effects of heat quickly and more intensely.

Signs include uncontrollable panting, foaming at the mouth, lethargy or

agitation. Pets experiencing heat stroke may also vomit, lose consciousness or collapse. Their tongue and gums may turn from bright red to blue or gray. If not treated, heat stroke can cause gastrointestinal upset, internal organ dysfunction, internal bleeding, infection and, in severe cases, death.

When temperatures soar, take precautions. Schedule dog walks in the early morning, check for hot pavement before heading out and never keep a pet confined in an unventilated space like a hot car. Be aware that even on days that don't seem overly hot, pets can still develop heat illness.

If you suspect your dog has heat stroke, try reducing their body temperature with a hose or cool bath. If your pet continues to pant uncontrollably or collapses, rush to a BluePearl emergency hospital. Prompt medical intervention can make all the difference.

In the end, we hope you never have to face an emergency, but if you do, being prepared is your pet's best chance. From recognizing the immediate need for care to identifying the signs of serious health issues, knowledge and quick action can be crucial. Remember to keep emergency veterinary info close and don't hesitate to use it—even if you're unsure. Prompt medical attention could make all the difference to your pet's health and well-being. ●

# + Expertise makes all the difference

## We're prepared for your pet's needs when seconds count.

BluePearl's highly qualified doctors and veterinary nurses can evaluate and stabilize your pet quickly and compassionately. Our in-house diagnostic equipment and state-of-the-art intensive care units help us provide pets with the full care they need to heal.

Many of our hospitals are open 24/7 every day, including holidays. Additionally, many of our emergency hospitals are home to specialty veterinary services, such as internal medicine and oncology. This team approach offers advanced care in crisis and seamless follow-up. Our doctors also work closely with your family veterinarian. The goal is to give your pet an exceptional continuum of care.

No matter what kind of emergency brings you to a BluePearl pet hospital, our veterinarians have the leading tools and training to act fast. ●



## Financial support when you need it most.

Figuring out how to pay for emergency pet care can seem as scary as your pet's condition. Fortunately, we have options! The CareCredit health and pet care credit card can help you pay for the critical treatment your pet needs at BluePearl today, letting you spread the payments over time. That way, you can focus on your pet, not how you'll pay. Visit [carecredit.com/apply](https://www.carecredit.com/apply) to see if you prequalify.



# What to expect in the veterinary ER

A guide to understanding your pet's emergency hospital experience.

**W**hen our beloved pets need lifesaving care, there's no better place to be than BluePearl Pet Hospital. Our emergency team members understand how stressful these situations can be, and we're here to reassure you. Here's an overview of the process to help you know the typical protocol.

There are many reasons to take your pet to our veterinary emergency department. Among the most common:

- Accidents, injuries and trauma (car strikes, animal attacks, etc.)
- Bleeding
- Bloat (gastric dilatation volvulus, or GDV)
- Collapse or unresponsiveness
- Complications from chronic diseases
- Difficulty breathing
- Straining to urinate
- Ingestion of medications, poisons or objects
- Seizures
- Vomiting and diarrhea

A recent BluePearl survey shows the most common pet poisons are chocolate, other foods toxic to animals, marijuana, medications, plants and household substances.



[CON'T](#) ↘

## ➤ EMERGENCY CARE

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### Before you arrive

When possible, call us on the way to the ER so we can discuss your pet's condition and our team can be prepared. Collect your pet's medical records, a list of medication and any helpful information. If your pet has ingested something that could be toxic, bring it with you if it's safe to do so. If you need help transporting your pet from your vehicle to the entrance, we can help with that.

### At the ER

When you arrive at a BluePearl hospital for your emergency visit, we make every effort to ensure your pet is assessed by a team member. We will take vital signs and assess your pet's stability. Your pet may receive IV fluids, pain medications, oxygen therapy, and, in some cases, blood or plasma transfusions.

We work on a triage system, just like a human emergency room, and pets with life-threatening conditions are prioritized (see "Triage: Understanding the tiers of emergency care," page 13). You'll receive discharge instructions and a list of medications, if needed.

## + After your visit

As part of the continuity of care and ensuring the best outcome, our team will keep your family veterinarian updated on your pet's condition and any treatment administered. You, of course, are key to your pet's follow-up and recovery. If you have any questions, we're here to help. ○

## Payment and financing

Your pet's BluePearl doctor will generate an estimate for any recommended diagnostics and treatments. Payment is due at the time of service. We also accept credit cards, including the CareCredit pet and health care credit card. To see if you prequalify (with no impact to your credit score), visit [carecredit.com/apply](https://www.carecredit.com/apply). As an added convenience, you can apply and pay on your mobile device. Please request the high end of your estimate when requesting financing through CareCredit.

## + Triage: Understanding the tiers of emergency care

In veterinary and human emergency care, patients are seen based on the severity of their condition. BluePearl teams treat the most seriously injured or critically ill pets first. Here are the levels of priority from most to least urgent.

### > Level 1: Lifesaving measures needed immediately

- Poisoning
- Allergic reactions
- Collapse
- Heat stroke
- Hypothermia
- Bloat (GDV)
- Acute seizure
- Major trauma (vehicular, animal attack)
- Penetrating bite wounds around neck or chest
- Choking
- Excessive bleeding
- Difficulty breathing
- Inability to urinate

### > Level 2: Wait times may apply

- Frequent vomiting
- Bloody diarrhea
- Paralysis
- Closed fractures
- Blood in urine
- Birthing difficulties
- Straining to urinate

### > Level 3: Not life-threatening (wait times may be longer)

- Abscess
- Minor wounds and lacerations
- Sneezing and nasal discharge
- Stable chronic disease
- Limping
- Skin conditions
- Sore eyes or ears





# Suni's lifesaving bladder repair surgery

Brittany knew something wasn't quite right with her cat Suni, and a visit to the family veterinarian quickly escalated into a life-threatening emergency.

**B**rittany rescued her sweet orange cat Suni from the Humane Society during the height of the pandemic. They live together in Micanopy, a small town outside Gainesville, Florida.

One Saturday morning, Brittany could tell Suni was irritated and not acting like his usual snuggly, playful self. A self-described “panicky mom,” Brittany likes to take her pets in for veterinary care at the first sign of trouble. Brittany took Suni right away to their family veterinarian, who suspected a urinary tract infection (UTI). Suni was whisked to the back for a urine sample.

That’s when Brittany heard howling.

They were Suni’s painful cries, which likely meant his urinary issues had escalated into a tear in his bladder. His condition was now extremely urgent, and Suni was referred to the emergency team at a nearby BluePearl pet hospital.

Upon arrival, it was clear to the BluePearl team that Suni was in a lot of pain. Dr. Jenny Tan, an emergency veterinarian, and her team raced to perform diagnostics, which included:

- **An ultrasound** scan to look at his bladder and abdomen.
- **A blood test** to further assess his condition.

The test results confirmed the presence of a life-threatening tear in Suni’s bladder.

“I told them the bad news. The bladder likely had a tear, and there was urine in the abdomen,” said Dr. Tan. “So we need to go pretty large in terms of stabilizing him and going in for surgery to get that bladder repaired. Or unfortunately, the other option was to say goodbye to him because he’s in so much pain and there was only really one way to fix it.”

Dr. Tan discussed the surgery with Brittany, including the risks, which involved a difficult fact: Suni had about a 60% chance of surviving the operation. At this point Suni was not doing well at all, and it was critical that he go into surgery right away.

To prepare Suni for the procedure, the team worked on stabilizing him, improving his blood pressure,

starting antibiotics, administering pain medication and more. As soon as Suni was stable, he was rushed to the operating room, and the team began the lifesaving procedure to repair the tear in his bladder.

Brittany’s long night of waiting was agonizing. She missed her beloved cat dearly and faced the stressful reality that he was in extremely critical condition and needed this operation to survive.

Then, Brittany finally got the phone call she’d been hoping for. “The surgery couldn’t have gone smoother,” said Dr. Tan.

**The surgery couldn't have gone smoother.**

Suni’s surgery had been successful and the tear was repaired. As he began his journey to recovery, the team provided hands-on care every step of the way.

“He had three nurses working with him after his surgery,” said Gloria Rodriguez, a technician supervisor who was part of Suni’s care team. “He had all hands on deck caring for him.” Both Dr. Tan and Gloria credit their team’s quick thinking and efficient communication with saving Suni’s life.

“There’s definitely a lot of trust in the operating room with my team,” said Dr. Tan. “It’s a lot of communication. Being able to trust that my team knows what they’re doing and feel comfortable telling me things makes it a very smooth process.”

Thankfully, Suni recovered remarkably well. In fact, Brittany believes he’s now better than ever. Their bond has grown even closer throughout this ordeal, and Brittany is thankful BluePearl saved his life during an emergency.

“Everyone at BluePearl was amazing,” shared Brittany while snuggling with Suni in her arms. “They were super kind and sweet, and now Suni is right back to his normal self.”



# Emergency visit **FAQs**

Facing a pet health crisis can be overwhelming, but the right information helps you act quickly.

**W**hether it's late at night or during the day, our exceptional veterinary teams are prepared to provide your pet with top-tier care. Find answers to common questions in this Q&A guide.

### **Do I need an appointment for emergency veterinary services?**

No appointment is needed for emergency treatment but, if possible, call our hospital to let us know you're coming.

### **What should I bring to the ER?**

Bring your pet's medical records and current medication(s). Your pet's primary veterinarian will share records with us, but if you have anything else that might be helpful, please bring it with you.

### **How will my family vet know about my pet's treatment at BluePearl?**

Once your pet is in our care, the BluePearl medical team will maintain regular communication with your veterinarian to ensure they are kept informed of your pet's progress. We highly value collaboration in veterinary medicine.

### **How late are you open?**

Most of our hospitals are open after hours and many are open 24 hours.

### **How much will my emergency visit to BluePearl cost?**

Care is individualized for each pet's specific needs. We will fully inform you of all cost options when we examine your pet and consult with you.

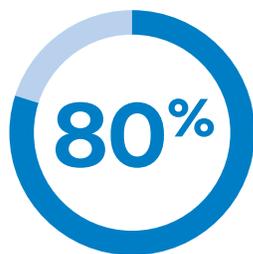
### **How do I pay for my visit to the ER?**

Payment is generally due at the time of services. We have several options including cash, check and credit cards. We also accept the CareCredit pet and health care credit card, a financing solution that helps you manage costs by making budget-friendly payments over time.

**We accept the CareCredit pet and health care credit card.**

### **Do you accept pet insurance?**

Yes. If you have Trupanion insurance, you will pay only the out-of-pocket portion during your visit. If you have another type of pet insurance, you will pay the full amount up front, then we will provide you with the documentation needed for reimbursement by your insurance company. The CareCredit credit card can be used to pay for care up front while you're waiting to receive your pet insurance reimbursement. 



of pet owners are concerned about how much treatment might cost at a specialty/emergency care veterinary hospital.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>CareCredit Vet ER and Specialty Care, Synchrony, 2023.

# + What is a veterinary specialist?

Vet specialists are just like medical specialists in the human world.

**Y**ou find out your beloved pet needs advanced care, but where do you turn? There's a vet for that! BluePearl's veterinary specialists are experts in delivering industry-leading medicine tailored to your pet's needs, and we're here to help.

Veterinary specialists focus on one area of medicine or specific animal species, such as exotic pet care, cardiology or dermatology. After veterinary school, they move on to an internship and residency, which involves an extra three to five years of training. Many will go a step further and become board-certified.

### The BluePearl experience

When you make an appointment with a BluePearl specialist, you can be assured they will provide an uncommon level of expertise and a comprehensive treatment plan designed uniquely for your pet.

Every day, BluePearl specialists perform advanced procedures once reserved only for people, including:

- Physical therapy
- Cataract removal
- Hemodialysis (kidney dialysis)
- Chemotherapy and radiation therapy for cancer

Our highly trained specialists also manage chronic conditions, such as:

- Diabetes
- Heart disease
- Intestinal diseases
- Allergies
- Epilepsy/seizures

Surgery is another area that demands advanced training and experience. We routinely handle a wide variety of cases including:

- Extracting foreign objects
- Repairing fractures and lacerations
- Removing tumors
- Knee and back surgeries

**+ There's a vet for that.**



[CON'T](#) 

## > SPECIALTY CARE



of pet owners look for information about payment options before seeking specialty veterinary care.<sup>1</sup>

Your BluePearl team is ready to discuss ways to pay. Please ask!

### Your pet's team

When developing treatment plans, we collaborate with family veterinarians, believing a united approach leads to better outcomes. BluePearl has earned a national reputation for honoring all facets of the human-animal bond in medical care.

### If your pet could choose

As a national network of veterinary hospitals, BluePearl is here when you need us most. We combine exacting skill with a deep love of animals that's clear in the care we provide. Whether it's taking the time to comfort an anxious pet or making multiple phone calls to update worried owners, we know compassion is essential to what we do.

## Why choose BluePearl?

When your pet has a serious health condition, it's important that you have confidence in their medical team. Here's why you can trust BluePearl's approach to care:

**Expert veterinarians.** Our board-certified specialists and ER clinicians have completed years of advanced education and training, and have access to global databases and many professional training opportunities.

**A team-based approach.** Most of our hospitals have a variety of experts under one roof, which allows for skilled medical minds to come together to solve challenging cases. That dynamic opens the door to exceptional, comprehensive care.

**Innovation and research.** We pride ourselves on staying at the forefront of veterinary medicine. BluePearl takes part in clinical trials, and we're among the largest organizations providing post-graduate DVM education to residents and interns.

**Technology.** We believe in investing in the latest technology. At many of our hospitals, you'll find CT scanners, MRIs and ultrasound devices, just like those used in human medicine.

**Compassion.** We honor the role pets play in families. It shows in the way we interact with your pet and our dedication to providing the best possible care.

**A wide variety  
of experts  
under one roof.**

## Let's work together

Visiting a specialty veterinary hospital can be scary, but we're here for you every step of the way. Once you've made an appointment with our advanced care team, there's no concern too big or small for us to discuss. Bring questions and let's begin the journey together as partners in your pet's health. 



## Managing the cost of specialty care

If you're nervous about the hospital bill along with your pet's health, you're not alone. In a recent study of pet owners seeking specialty care:<sup>1</sup>

**80%**

were concerned about how much specialty treatment might cost.

**69%**

were concerned about how they would pay for treatment.

Our team will discuss possible treatment costs and payment options up front. We accept the CareCredit health and pet care credit card, which lets you make budget-friendly payments over time. To see if you prequalify, visit [carecredit.com/apply](https://www.carecredit.com/apply).

<sup>1</sup>CareCredit Vet ER and Specialty Care, Synchrony, 2023.



# JackJack's recovery from heart failure

When a persistent cough revealed a devastating diagnosis, JackJack received hands-on care from BluePearl teams in two cities.



Sharrie and her family were preparing for a cross-country move from Texas to Florida when, one day, they noticed their 7-year-old Dalmatian named JackJack coughing.

JackJack's cough escalated to the point where Sharrie knew he needed a late-night vet visit. He was diagnosed with kennel cough, a contagious respiratory illness affecting dogs, and sent home with an understanding that he should recover fairly quickly.

But JackJack's cough continued to worsen.

Sharrie came to the terrifying realization that JackJack was having a hard time getting air into his lungs, and the situation became a panic-level emergency.

JackJack's primary veterinarian referred the family to BluePearl Pet Hospital in San Antonio, where Dr. Catherine Strey, a critical care veterinarian, revealed a much more serious diagnosis: severe dilated cardiomyopathy and pulmonary congestion.

As a medical professional and cardiac nurse in human medicine, Sharrie immediately understood

the translation and severity of this startling diagnosis: JackJack was experiencing heart failure.

The BluePearl team jumped into action, providing a personalized treatment plan that included prescription medication and dietary changes.

Sharrie knew her family's move to Sarasota was approaching, leaving her wondering how she could continue JackJack's care and find a way for his current and potential new veterinary teams to collaborate.

That's when she discovered the cardiology team at BluePearl Pet Hospital in Sarasota.

"We were moving with a newly diagnosed and very sick animal," explained Sharrie. "It made us feel safe that we had a doctor here with BluePearl. They could collaborate. They had the records. We were going to be in good hands."

Now under the care of Dr. Jennifer Mulz, a board-certified veterinary cardiologist, JackJack went in for his recheck exam to assess the progress of his condition.

[CONT'D](#) ▾

## ► SPECIALTY CARE: JACKJACK'S STORY

Dr. Mulz compared his previous x-rays from the San Antonio hospital with the new x-rays taken after the move to Sarasota and made a fortunate discovery.

“When we rechecked him, we actually found that his heart looked remarkably better,” said Dr. Mulz.

JackJack's heart size had returned to normal.

Dr. Mulz and her team delivered the news to Sharrie and her family, who were overjoyed.

JackJack's journey with heart failure ended as swiftly as it began. He was able to resume normal life and soon felt like his old self again. Sharrie knew he had recovered when he started getting the zoomies again.

Erin Marshall, a certified veterinary technician in Sarasota who played a big role in JackJack's care, reflects on his remarkable recovery.

“It always feels good to give good news,” said Erin. “When it's great news to the point where the pet is improving and able to get on with their life like a normal dog, that's pretty amazing.”

### What is heart failure in dogs and cats?

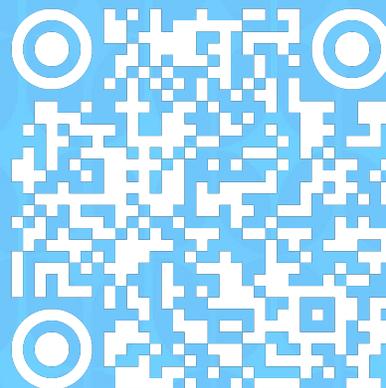
Heart failure is the inability of the heart muscle to pump effectively. The most common causes of heart failure are the progression of chronic valve disease (degeneration) or heart muscle disease (cardiomyopathy); in rare cases, congenital or diet-related heart conditions may also result in heart failure.

Routine wellness exams are an excellent way to know if your pet has a heart murmur (or develops one with age). From there, a veterinarian may recommend diagnostic and treatment steps that can help prevent an emergency and prolong the course of the disease.

In large breed dogs, a thinning out and dilation of the heart (dilated cardiomyopathy, or DCM) is an important cause of heart failure. Breeds such as boxers and Doberman pinschers may present with this disorder, which has a genetic component.

Ask your veterinarian about heart disease if you have any concerns about your dog or cat, and visit [BluePearlVet.com](http://BluePearlVet.com) for more educational resources.

Scan the QR code to watch a video of Sharrie talking about her experience with JackJack and the BluePearl team.





Leo, a blood donor hero in Clearwater, Florida, is a “perfect gentleman” every time he visits to donate blood, the BluePearl Pet Hospital team says.

## + Blood banks for pets

The demand for pet blood transfusions is rising. Could your pet become a blood donation hero?

**J**ust as humans require blood transfusions for medical conditions or emergency situations, so do our beloved pets. Unfortunately, there is a shortage of available blood for animals while the need for transfusions grows. As an extension of our commitment to nurturing the human-animal bond and saving more pets’ lives, BluePearl offers pet blood banking services at some of our hospitals.

Like similar programs around the nation, we rely on dog and

cat donors to save and improve the quality of pets’ lives, as well as expand donor programs.

### Every drop counts; every donor is a hero

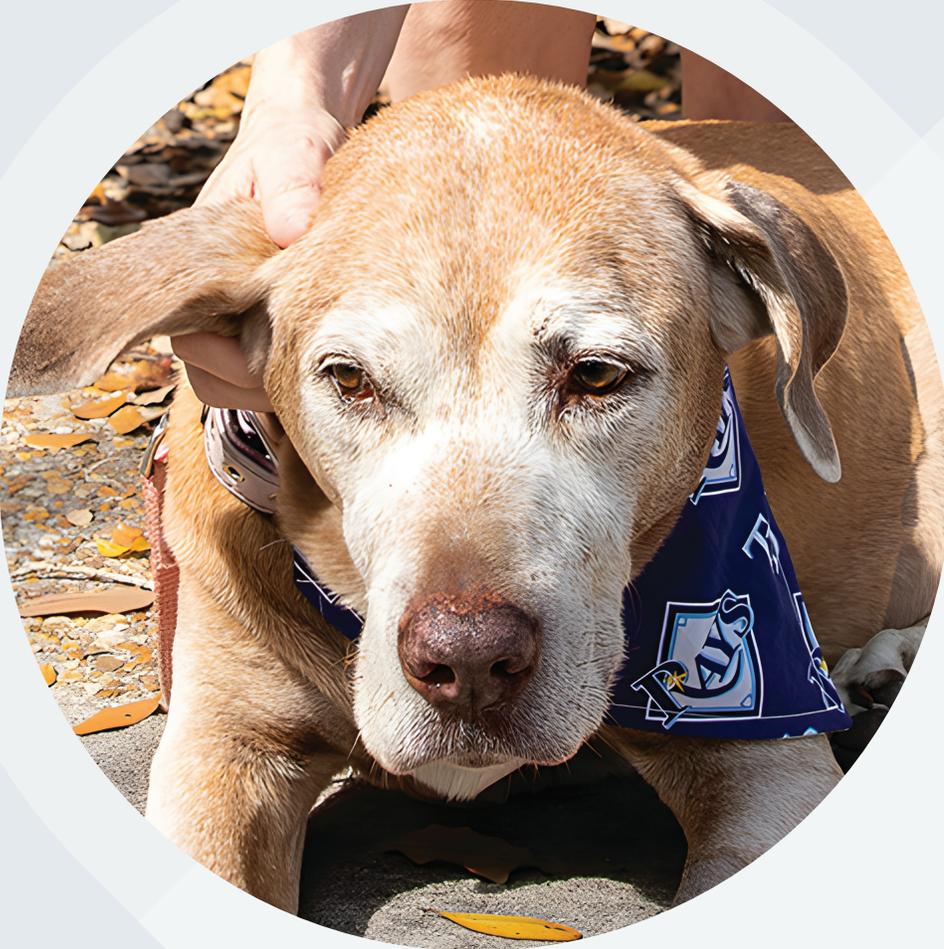
Ours is a voluntary program and participation is free. And it’s not just pets in need who benefit; donors get these advantages:

- Complimentary initial prescreening and annual lab work every year your pet participates in the program.

- Complimentary physical exam to ensure a clean bill of health.
- Plenty of treats and love at each donation.

### Doing what’s right

If you’re interested in having your pet participate, thank you! We desperately need more donors. And if this hospital does not yet have a blood bank, please ask about other local services. As a committed partner in community pet care, we’re happy to provide information. 



# Amber's journey with megaesophagus

When one diagnosis became two, Amber was referred to BluePearl for lifesaving treatment and multispecialty care.

**A**mber is a 13-year-old chocolate Labrador and red nose pit bull mix — recognizable by her loving eyes and distinguished, graying fur. She lives in Maitland, Florida, with her owner, Jodi.

One day, she started regurgitating hours after eating. Jodi took Amber to her primary veterinarian, where chest x-rays revealed she had megaesophagus — a condition affecting the muscles in the esophagus.

The next day, things took a turn for the worse.

While her family was processing her new diagnosis, Amber's symptoms worsened, and she needed emergency veterinary care. Jodi was referred to BluePearl Pet Hospital in Maitland, where she would have access to 24-hour services and multiple specialists under one roof.

One of her BluePearl veterinarians, Dr. April Summers, who is board-certified in emergency and critical care, explained her diagnoses:

“She had the telltale enlarged esophagus, and then she also had aspiration pneumonia, likely secondary to her megaesophagus,” said Dr. Summers.

Amber received around-the-clock care.

Her treatments included IV antibiotics to heal the infection in her lungs, as well as oxygen support.

When her pneumonia resolved and her case became less serious in nature, her BluePearl veterinary team — which also included Dr. Sara Wilkes, Dr. Christina

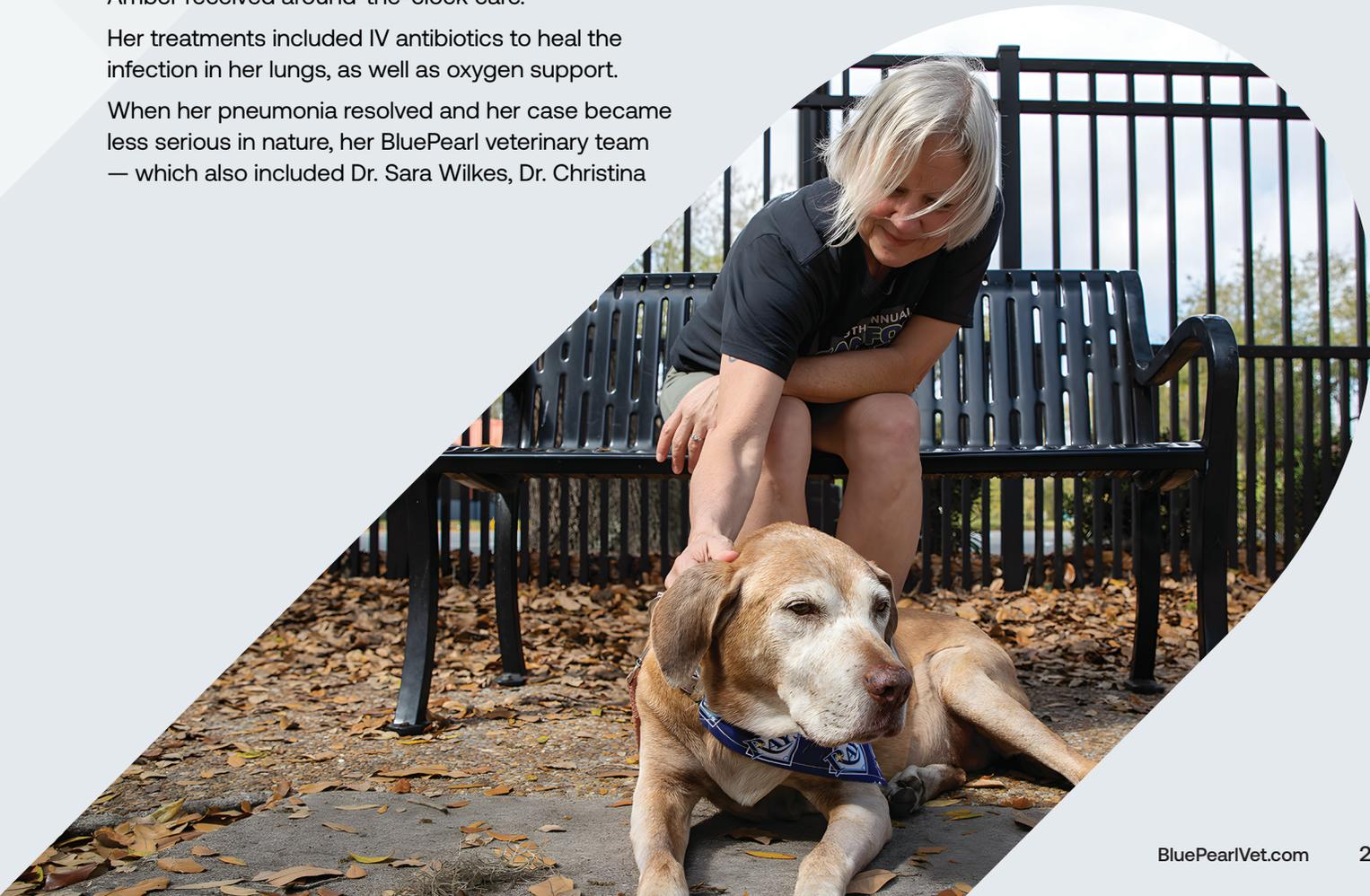
Chan, who is board certified in veterinary internal medicine, and Kaley Esley, certified veterinary technician — focused on creating a personalized megaesophagus care plan just right for Amber's ongoing needs and lifestyle.

Managing megaesophagus in dogs involves keeping the patient upright both during and immediately after eating. Amber's team recommended a simple and effective solution — using an exercise ball to keep her sitting comfortably in the right position during mealtime.

Jodi and Amber received hands-on training from Esley to feel confident using this technique and administering her new medications at home.

“I am so grateful to everybody at BluePearl for taking such good care of her. All of the vets and all the vet techs, and even the front desk staff were amazing,” says Jodi.

Amber and Jodi have adjusted beautifully to their new routine, which still includes lots of leisurely walks and gentle pets — as well as the addition of Amber's cozy blue exercise ball. 



# Specialty care FAQs.

When your pet needs advanced veterinary care, it helps to know what to expect. Start here.

If your pet is facing a serious health condition, uncertainty can make the situation seem worse. The BluePearl veterinary team wants pet owners to be informed, and will share what to expect at every step of the journey. In the meantime, here are answers to some questions you might have right now.

## Do I need a referral to see a BluePearl veterinary specialist?

You can get a referral from your family vet or self-refer. If you make an appointment with one of our specialists directly, we'll contact your pet's primary vet to coordinate the best treatment plan.

## Why would my family veterinarian refer my pet to a BluePearl specialist for care?

Like people, pets may require specialty medical intervention. For complex conditions, serious illnesses or life-threatening injuries, the best care for your pet might include specialized treatment from a veterinarian who is board-certified in a specific area of medicine or surgery. Family veterinarians may recommend a visit to BluePearl if your pet needs additional medical tests, procedures or treatments that their hospital doesn't offer.

## What kinds of specialty care does BluePearl offer?

While not all services are available in all locations, the 100-plus BluePearl hospitals throughout the country collectively offer the following types of care: anesthesiology and pain management, avian and exotics medicine, cardiology, critical care, dentistry and oral surgery, dermatology, diagnostic imaging, emergency medicine, internal medicine, neurology, nutrition, oncology, ophthalmology, radiation oncology, sports medicine and rehabilitation, and surgery. Contact your local BluePearl for available services.

## What do I need to bring to my pet's appointment with a BluePearl specialist?

Typically, we will have already contacted your primary veterinarian, who will send us your pet's medical records and x-rays. If you have additional medical information that will help us treat your pet, please bring it with you. Please arrive 15-20 minutes before your appointment to fill out any initial paperwork.

## What can I expect during my pet's first specialty visit?

Our medical team will review the information provided by you and your pet's primary veterinarian and conduct an initial health assessment. We will work with you to create a treatment plan, including cost estimates, before proceeding with any additional tests or procedures.

## Will you contact my pet's primary veterinarian?

Yes, we will communicate closely with your pet's primary care vet throughout our specialty care process. We consider ourselves partners with your family veterinarian and with you. Together, we provide your pet with the exceptional care they deserve.

## How much will my specialty visit to BluePearl cost?

Our care is individualized for each pet's specific needs. We will fully inform you of all cost options when we examine your pet and consult with you.

## How do I pay for my visit to the specialist?

Payment is generally due at the time of service. Our payment options include cash, check and credit cards. We also accept the CareCredit pet and healthcare credit card, a financing solution that helps you manage costs by making budget-friendly payments over time.

**We will work  
with you  
on a treatment plan.**

## Do you accept pet insurance?

Yes. If you have Trupanion insurance, you will pay only the out-of-pocket portion during your visit. If you have another type of pet insurance, you will pay the full amount up front, then we will provide you with all the documentation needed to be reimbursed by your insurance company.

The CareCredit pet and healthcare credit card can be used to pay for care up front, while you wait to receive your pet insurance reimbursement. 



# + Managing the cost of your pet's specialty and emergency care

CareCredit helps ease your financial worries with flexible payment plans.

**W**hen your pet needs specialized or emergency care, it's not just their health that's a concern; it's how you'll manage the cost. We at BluePearl understand — most of us are pet owners, too — and we're committed to providing both exceptional care and convenient payment options through CareCredit, a credit card designed specifically for pet and health care costs.

## The challenge of unexpected pet expenses

People want the best for their beloved pets, especially when it comes to health care, but just like the human world, serious illnesses or injuries to our animals can create unforeseen expenses.

A survey from Synchrony reveals that many pet owners face significant anxiety over the cost of necessary treatments. Some 45% of dog owners and 38% of cat owners believed they were prepared for the financial demands of pet care — but then realized they weren't.<sup>1</sup>

# How CareCredit can help

CareCredit is designed to help you manage veterinary costs by offering flexible financing options. The card can be used for everything from routine checkups to emergency surgeries, making it easier to handle the financial aspect of your pet's health care.

## Quick and easy application

Applying for CareCredit is straightforward and can be done in several ways:

- **Online:** Visit [carecredit.com/apply](https://carecredit.com/apply) to fill out an application.
- **Phone:** Call 866-893-7864 to apply directly through a customer service representative.
- **Custom Link:** Each BluePearl hospital has a custom link, which you can ask for during your visit or call.

Once approved, you can use your CareCredit account immediately to cover your pet's health care costs.

## Flexible financing options

CareCredit offers various financing plans, including deferred interest promotions and extended payment options, which allow you to choose a plan that best fits your budget. This can significantly alleviate the stress of high medical bills, making it easier to focus on your pet's recovery rather than finances.



## Real-life scenarios and solutions

**Scenario:** Your cat needs emergency surgery after a sudden illness and you're faced with a substantial veterinary bill.

**Solution:** With CareCredit, you can apply quickly, get an instant decision, and use your account to pay for the surgery. The flexible payment options allow you to spread the cost over time, making it more manageable.

**Scenario:** Your dog is referred to a BluePearl specialist for ongoing treatment of a chronic condition.

**Solution:** As all BluePearl locations accept CareCredit, you can use your account to cover the consultation and all subsequent treatments, ensuring your dog continues to receive the best possible care without financial delay.

## Peace of mind for pet owners

CareCredit is accepted at all BluePearl emergency and specialty hospitals nationwide, ensuring your pet receives consistent, high-quality treatment. It helps you manage the costs of emergency and specialty care and ensures that your pet receives exceptional care when they need it most.

By offering a dedicated credit card for pet health, CareCredit allows you to say "yes" to treatment without hesitation, providing peace of mind and the ability to focus on what's most important — your pet's health and well-being.

For more information on how CareCredit can assist you with your pet's health care financing, visit [carecredit.com](https://carecredit.com) or speak to a representative at your BluePearl hospital. 

<sup>1</sup>CareCredit Pet Lifetime of Care Study, August 2021. CareCredit is a Synchrony solution.

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