



media *release*

Monday 15 September 2014

NEUROLOGY SPECIALISTS PERFORM BRAIN SURGERY TO GIVE NINTH LIFE BACK TO NINNY THE CAT

Ninny, an eight-year-old female domestic short hair cat, has received emergency life-saving surgery to remove a brain tumour at the Animal Health Trust (AHT), near Newmarket.

Ninny's owner became concerned when her vision became reduced and she started to suffer from seizures, so on advice from their vets, Medivet in Long Sutton, Ninny was referred to the AHT's Small Animal Clinic.

Courtenay Freeman, Senior Neurology Clinician at the AHT, who treated Ninny, said: "Ninny was initially referred to the AHT's ophthalmology specialists because of the loss of sight in her left eye. However, it was suspected at her first appointment at the AHT that she was suffering with a problem affecting her brain."

Because the AHT's Small Animal Clinic is multi-discipline and helps patients with eye, brain, spine and skin issues and also those with cancer, Ninny was able to be immediately transferred to the veterinary charity's Neurology and Neurosurgery Unit for further investigation.

On initial evaluation, Ninny was found to be weak on her left side and blind in her left eye. These findings, in addition to the seizure she had suffered, suggested a problem affecting the right side of her forebrain. Ninny was admitted for an MRI (Magnetic Resonance Imaging) scan of her brain to investigate the underlying cause.

A large tumour causing severe compression of the right side of her brain was discovered and diagnosed as a meningioma; the most common brain tumour in cats.

Courtenay explains: "Meningiomas are tumours that grow on the surface of the brain causing compression, neurologic signs, and sometimes seizures. They don't usually spread to other parts of the body and can be removed surgically, although they tend to grow back after a year or two."

Following discovery of her meningioma, Ninny's owners decided the best option would be brain surgery to remove the tumour. However, Ninny's condition began to deteriorate rapidly so she was rushed into the AHT's surgical suite for an emergency craniectomy to remove the tumour and relieve the pressure on her brain.

This surgery involved removing a piece of Ninny's skull to gain access to the tumour. Upon opening the skull, the AHT's neurosurgeon could see Ninny's brain was very swollen, but fortunately the tumour was visible and accessible. The tumour was removed and the compressed brain was able to return to its normal shape.

In the days following surgery, Ninny improved neurologically and became more alert and responsive. Initially, she required feeding through a feeding tube and support from the AHT's Internal Medicine Unit, but soon regained her normal appetite. Ninny remained hospitalised at the AHT for a week, improving remarkably every day and regaining her personality.

Ninny was discharged to her owner's care eight days after she was admitted and has continued to improve at home. Three months after surgery, she has almost returned to her normal self and is starting to enjoy her walks in the garden again.

Courtenay added, "Ninny has done so well to recover from her illness. It's wonderful to know we were able to remove the tumour and allow her to return to her normal happy self. These brain tumours are relatively common in cats and not all cats are as lucky as Ninny. Her owners will have to keep an eye out for any signs of another tumour, but we hope Ninny will be able to continue living a normal, happy and healthy life."

Along with the excellent clinical care the AHT offers, as a veterinary charity the organisation is also committed to furthering knowledge and understanding of diseases which affect pets. Research into brain tumours is ongoing to improve our understanding of these tumours and improve treatment options for our patients.

If you would like to support the AHT's research into many diseases affecting horses, dogs and cats such as cancer, epilepsy, blinding eye conditions and equine grass sickness, please donate online at www.aht.org.uk

Ends

For further information, please contact:

Farrah Stevens, AHT press office, 01638 555602

Additional notes:

- The Animal Health Trust (AHT) is an independent charity, employing over 200 scientists, vets and support workers. It aims to improve the health and welfare of horses, dogs and cats through research. It also provides specialist referral services and continuous education to vets. Visit the website at www.aht.org.uk