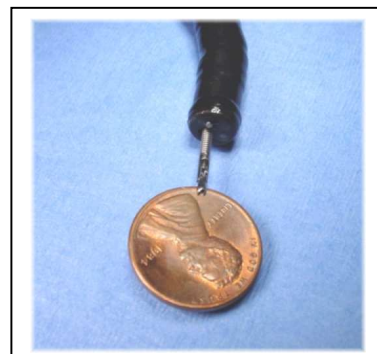


ENDOSCOPY

At Ferry Farm Animal Clinic, we use flexible endoscopy to study the gastrointestinal tract, as well as portions of the upper respiratory tract. Endoscopy can also be used in other areas, such as arthroscopy (joints), bronchoscopy (inside the lungs), and laparoscopy (inside the abdomen). However, these procedures require specialized instruments and techniques. When they are necessary for your pet, veterinary specialists with these capabilities are available by referral.



An endoscope is made so that the operator can look through a lens at one end, down along a series of fiberoptics, to see what is in front of the lens on the other end. The controls allow the end of the scope to be flexed in different directions so that the operator can see in all four directions in order to fully examine the studied area for abnormalities. A channel down through the scope allows for biopsies to be taken through the scope, as well as retrieval of foreign objects that our pets choose to eat!



General anesthesia is required for all endoscopy procedures. For upper gastrointestinal studies, the endoscope is passed through the mouth, down the esophagus, and into the stomach. In most patients, we can also enter the small intestine. Patients must be fasted up to 24 hours to ensure that no food material is present that would block our ability to observe the entire stomach. For colonoscopy (large intestine), the endoscope is inserted through the rectum and into the colon. We can also usually observe the cecum (similar to our appendix), and sometimes the lower part of the small intestine. The patient preparation for this is more involved. In order to completely examine the colon, all fecal material must be removed, so a series of laxatives and enemas are given for 24 hours before the procedure is done. While most upper GI endoscopy procedures can be done as day-patient procedures, a colonoscopy requires an overnight stay the night before so that the proper preparation can be performed.



We at Ferry Farm Animal Clinic feel that endoscopy is a valuable asset for diagnosing and treating gastrointestinal diseases. Although not useful in every situation, we can often gain valuable information through endoscopy without subjecting your pet to the trauma and risks of surgery. Also, retrieval of foreign objects that have been ingested can often be performed, again without the need for surgery. The risk of complication is less than surgery, and the associated hospital stay and recovery time at home can also be greatly reduced. Endoscopy is one of the many services that our doctors have worked hard to have readily available when necessary to meet your pet's health care needs.

The pictures to the right are examples of the views that our doctors can see through the endoscope. The left view is an inside view of the stomach and the right is a view inside the colon.

