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"Bluebird" - British Shorthair with Three Slipped Discs



Bluebird

With the advent of better and better technology vets and doctors alike are able to more easily diagnose conditions that may have been missed in the past.

One of the most useful - but also most expensive - modern diagnostic tools is the MRI (magnetic resonance imaging) scanner. This can take images that are a little bit like having a 3 dimensional x-ray; images of a body area can be taken in a manner similar to slicing a loaf of bread and looking at the individual slices one at a time.

Bluebird - a 9 year old British shorthair cat - was recently able to benefit from having an MRI scan. She had become weak on her back legs and had struggling to walk for several weeks.

A spinal cord tumour was suspected and anti-inflammatories were prescribed to try to improve her quality of life. However, without more sophisticated technology, we could not be completely sure whether we had the correct diagnosis. Conventional 2 dimensional x-rays suggested that perhaps Bluebird might have a slipped disc in her back, and if this was the case, an operation may be possible to remove the slipped disc material from where it was pressing on her spinal cord.

Whilst MRI scans are now an excellent method for diagnosing problems such as this, they are very expensive machines, and are only located at a few specialist centres in the UK. Thus, Bluebird had to travel to the Animal Health Trust at Newmarket for her scan.

Her MRI scan revealed that she actually had 3 slipped discs in her back, one of which had compressed her spinal cord so that it was only 25% of its normal diameter! Specialist veterinary neurosurgeons performed a major operation to remove the area of compression on the spinal cord.

Bluebird went on to make what her owners described as a "miraculous" recovery. Although she will need rest and physio to get back to full fitness, Bluebird is already thanking her lucky stars that she is a 21st century cat - 20 years ago her condition would probably not have been diagnosed, and she would have been permanently crippled by the condition. It has taken thousands of pounds worth of treatment to "fix" her, but she doesn't regret a penny!

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This article is available on the Fairfield Veterinary Centre web site at www.fairfield-vets.co.uk

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