



**VETERINARY VOICE:  
Tips of the Trade**

<b>Neurology- Vestibular Disease</b>	
<b>What does a head tilt mean?</b>	A head tilt indicates a disorder of the vestibular system. The vestibular system is comprised of the inner ear, the vestibular nerve, the brainstem as well as the flocculonodular lobes of the cerebellum. Disorders of the vestibular system can be localized to the periphery (the inner ear or the vestibular nerve) or centrally (the brainstem of the cerebellum). In most cases, other neurological dysfunction signs are evident such as ataxia, circling, falling to the side of the lesion and nystagmus.
<b>How do you differentiate between central and peripheral vestibular disease?</b>	Postural reactions (e.g. delayed or absent conscious proprioceptive reactions) are generally normal with peripheral vestibular diseases and delayed or absent with central vestibular disorders.
<b>How is the diagnosis made?</b>	<p>A peripheral vestibular disorder may be secondary to an otitis interna/media that has progressed from the external ear canal. Therefore, starting with a conventional examination of the external ear canal and eardrum with an otoscope is the best first step. A specific treatment with the appropriate antibiotics and anti-inflammatory drugs may be successful.</p> <p>If the examination of the external ear canals and eardrums is not diagnostic, then further tests are needed in order to determine the problem. Because diagnosis may be challenging, a myringotomy, skull CT-scan and possible CSF tap may be necessary. These tests are generally required for evaluating the cause of the central vestibular disease and recommending the most appropriate treatment.</p>
<b>Questions?</b>  <b>Neurology Expert:</b> <b>Peter Gordon, DVM,</b> <b>DACVIM (neurology)</b>	The Veterinary Specialty Center of Tucson has a board-certified neurologist available for questions and consultations on neurological diseases and surgeries during the weekdays. He is also on call to provide consultations to VSCT emergency doctors and to perform emergency procedures and neurosurgery for patients seen by the VSCT emergency service. Board-certified neurologists have four additional years of training after veterinary school and are certified by the American College of Veterinary Internal Medicine to assure competency in advanced veterinary neurology and neurosurgery.