

SHOULD I CONSIDER HAVING BLOODWORK ON MY PET?

Routine Blood tests are relatively easy and inexpensive and give you and your veterinarian valuable information about what is going on with the health of your pet. Please see the next page for a detailed list of the tests included in our basic screening blood tests and what those tests can tell us.

In general, there are three main reasons to think about having routine blood work on your cat or dog:

1. You have seen some changes in your pet.

Any new symptom - whether it be a change in appetite, energy level, water intake, or just a vague change in attitude can be a warning of a significant problem. Pets can't talk to us specifically about how they are feeling and this makes laboratory tests very important in veterinary medicine. We can learn so much from a simple set of laboratory tests (see the next page for a description of the tests included in our basic blood work and what they can tell us)– sometimes it's all we need to make a diagnosis and be able to start treatment to get your pet back to feeling his or her best. "When in doubt – check it out"

2. You have a seemingly healthy pet and want to make sure all is going well inside and get a baseline.

Peace of mind is a valuable thing and yearly basic blood work can give you some of this. Even more valuable is having a base line set of values obtained when your pet is healthy to which we can compare if a problem should come up later. Having this baseline can often save valuable time, money, and stress for your pet should they become ill.

3. Your pet is a senior (we generally consider this at 7 years old or both cats and dogs)

All pets over the age of 7 should have yearly routine screening to help ensure that any problems can be caught early. Remember, they can't tell us about the symptoms they may be experiencing. Early detection is paramount to the successful treatment of any illness or disease. Yearly screening allows us to watch trends and subtle changes in your pet's lab results as well as give us a healthy baseline to which we can compare later on if needed.



Your Pet's Blood Work

Blood work will help us determine causes of illness accurately, safely and quickly and let us monitor the progress of medical treatments. To help you understand your pet's test results, this sheet briefly explains common tests. A checkmark in any box indicates a significant abnormal finding regarding your pet's blood work. If you have any questions, please ask. We want you to understand our recommendations and be a partner in your pet's care.

Complete Blood Count (CBC)

This is the most common blood test performed on pets and people. A CBC gives information regarding hydration status, anemia, infection, clotting abilities and immune system responses. This test is essential for pets with fevers, vomiting, diarrhea, weakness, pale gums, or loss of appetite. If your pet needs surgery, a CBC can detect bleeding disorders or other unseen abnormalities.

- HCT** (hematocrit) measures the percentage of red blood cells to detect anemia and dehydration.
- Hb and MCHC** (hemoglobin and mean corpuscular hemoglobin concentration) measures the oxygen-carrying proteins of red blood cells.
- WBC** (white blood cells) measures the body's immune cells. Increases or decreases indicate certain diseases or infections.
- GRANS and L/M** (granulocytes and lymphocytes/monocytes) are specific types of white blood cells.
- EOS** (eosinophils) are a specific type of white blood cell that may indicate allergic or parasitic conditions.
- PLT** (platelet count) measures cells that form blood clots.
- RETICS** (reticulocytes) are immature red blood cells. High level indicate regenerative anemia.
- FIBR** (fibrinogen) is an important clotting factor. High levels may indicate a dog is 30-40 days pregnant.

Blood Chemistry

These common blood serum tests evaluate organ function, electrolyte status, hormone levels, and more. They're important in evaluating older pets, pets with vomiting and diarrhea or toxin exposure, pets receiving long-term medications, and overall health before anesthesia.

- ALB** (albumin) is a serum protein that helps evaluate hydration, hemorrhage and intestinal, liver and kidney disease.
- ALKP** (alkaline phosphatase) elevations may indicate liver damage, Cushing's disease and active bone growth in young pets. This test is especially important in cats.
- ALT** (alanine aminotransferase) is a sensitive indicator of active liver damage but doesn't indicate a cause.
- AST** (aspartate aminotransferase) increases may indicate liver, heart or skeletal muscle damage.
- BUN** (blood urea nitrogen) indicates kidney function. An increase blood level is called azotemia and can be caused by kidney, liver and heart disease, urethral obstruction, shock and dehydration.
- Ca** (calcium) deviations can indicate a variety of diseases. Tumors, hyperparathyroidism, kidney disease and low albumin are just a few of the conditions that alter serum calcium.
- CHOL** (cholesterol) is used to supplement diagnosis of hypothyroidism, liver disease, Cushing's disease and diabetes mellitus.
- Cl** (chloride) is an electrolyte often lost with vomiting and Addison's disease. Elevations often indicate dehydration.
- CREA** (creatinine) reveals kidney function. This test helps distinguish between kidney and non-kidney causes of elevated BUN.
- GGT** (gamma glutamyl transferase) is an enzyme that indicates liver disease or corticosteroid excess.
- GLOB** (globulin) is a blood protein that often increases with chronic inflammation and certain disease states.
- GLU** (glucose) is a blood sugar. Elevated levels may indicate diabetes mellitus. Low levels can cause collapse, seizures or coma.
- K** (potassium) is an electrolyte lost with vomiting, diarrhea, or excessive urination. Increased levels may indicate kidney failure, Addison's disease, dehydration and urethral obstruction. High levels can lead to cardiac arrest.
- Na** (sodium) is an electrolyte lost with vomiting, diarrhea, kidney disease and Addison's disease. This test helps indicate hydration status.
- PHOS** (phosphorus) elevations are often associated with kidney disease, hyperthyroidism and bleeding disorders.
- TBIL** (total bilirubin) elevations may indicate liver or hemolytic disease. This test helps identify bile duct problems and certain types of anemia.
- TP** (total protein) indicates hydration status and provides additional information about the liver, kidney and infectious diseases.