

PRE-ANAESTHETIC BLOOD TESTING

THE VALUE OF PRE-ANAESTHETIC BLOOD TESTS

The greatest concern of many pet owners is anaesthetic and surgical safety.

Looks can be deceiving.....

If your pet is up to date with vaccinations, heart and intestinal worm prevention, is a healthy weight, has a normal level of activity, appetite and drinking habits, and is normal on physical veterinary examination.....it usually means that your pet is 100% healthy.....but this is not always the case.

It may only be when your pet needs to be anaesthetised that early organ dysfunction becomes apparent - manifested through anaesthetic complications. These complications may occur during an anaesthetic - or more commonly delay anaesthetic recovery or develop some weeks following a procedure.

The likelihood that your pet is masking sub-clinical disease increases with your pet's age. Pets over 7 years of age are considered seniors and are at the greatest risk of anaesthetic complications.

WHAT CAN A BLOOD TEST CAN TELL YOU THAT AN EXAMINATION CAN'T?

A pre-anaesthetic blood evaluation provides your vet with a window inside your pet - assessing liver and kidney function and protein levels - which are responsible for the safe metabolism and elimination of anaesthetic agents and therefore a safe recovery. Red blood cell counts are also included in pre-anaesthetic tests which will influence surgical risk in major procedures where bleeding is a possible complication.

Dysfunction of the liver and kidney will really only be apparent clinically when disease is advanced. Blood testing will pick up problems much earlier than an examination ever could.

It is in the best interest of your pet's safety to pick up any abnormalities before they are anaesthetised.

WHAT HAPPENS IF THE RESULTS ARE ABNORMAL?

The results of a pre-anaesthetic test will help us to select the most appropriate (safest) sedation and anaesthetic for your pet. It will also influence the duration and volume of fluid therapy and the choice of pain relief given to your pet. In some cases where blood abnormalities are significant, your pet's anaesthetic may be delayed until further investigation is performed or even cancelled in extreme cases (where the risk of anaesthesia is outweighed by the benefits of the scheduled procedure).

HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE TO GET THE BLOOD RESULTS BACK?

Pre-anaesthetic blood tests are run **on-site** with results obtained within 10 mins of blood collection. Tests can be performed on the same day of a scheduled surgery, or in cases where underlying problems are suspected (especially senior pets), days in advance of the procedure.

TOP FOUR REASONS WHY WE RECOMMEND TESTING YOUR PET BEFORE ANAESTHESIA

- Enjoy peace of mind - when results are normal.
- Detect hidden illness - pre-anaesthetic blood tests may pick up early organ dysfunction in apparently healthy animals. It is in the best interest of your pet to address abnormalities before your pet becomes unwell.
- Reduce risks and consequences - where results are abnormal we can adjust your pet's pre-medication, anaesthetic agents, IV fluid volume and duration, and choice of pain relief, providing you peace of mind that your pet is receiving the safest anaesthetic possible for his/her health state. Where blood abnormalities are significant, your pet's anaesthetic may be delayed until further investigation is performed or even cancelled in extreme cases (where the risk of anaesthesia is outweighed by the benefits of the scheduled procedure)
- Protect your pet's future health - These tests become part of your pet's medical record, providing a baseline for future reference.

So for greater peace of mind and to minimise anaesthetic risk - it is in the best interest of your pet to have a pre-anaesthetic blood test.