

Normal Vitals for the Cat and Dog

What are vital signs?

- *Vital signs* are outward signs of what is going on inside the body
- Basics: Heart rate; Respiratory rate/effort; MM/CRT; Temperature; Mentality; Pulse strength
- Advanced: Blood pressure; SPO2

Mentality

Mentality is one of the easiest and fastest ways to prioritize a patient triage. It can also explain variations in other vital signs (your happy bouncy lab puppy may have a higher-than-normal HR if they are BAR)

BAR: Labrador retriever healthy puppy

QAR: Old man poodle

QDR: Kidney failure cat

Depressed: Really sick parvo puppy

Altered: Confused, disoriented

Obtunded: Post-ictal (post seizure) patient

Hyperaesthetic: Marijuana ingestion

Sedate: Recoving from sedation/anesthesia

Respiratory rate

- Respiratory rate is driven by our need for oxygen and our need to expel carbon dioxide
- Respiratory rate should be quantified (what rate) and qualified (how hard)
- Respiratory effort: Mild, Moderate, Severe; Labored breathing; Dyspnea
- Too fast: Tachypnea; Too slow: Bradypnea

Adult cat normal: 20-30 brpm
Kitten normal: 24-48 brpm
Adult dog normal: 15-30 brpm
Puppy normal: 15-40 brpm

Heart rate

- Heart is responsible for circulating blood throughout the body
- Cardiac output= amount of blood pumped by the heart in one minute
- Can be taken by auscultation (listening) or palpating a pulse (femoral)
- Quantify (what rate) and Qualify (how hard, normal rhythm) pulse
- Pulse strength: Strong, Normal, Weak/Thready, Absent
- Rate too fast: Tachycardia; Rate too slow: Bradycardia

Adult cat normal: 140-220 bpm
Kitten: 220-260 bpm
Adult dog: Small: 120-160 bpm;
Medium/Large: 60-120 bpm
Puppy normal: 120-160 bpm

Temperature

- Internal body temperature
- Hyperthermia vs Fever
- Hyperthermic (too high): Seizures, Organ failure, DIC, MODS, Coagulopathy, death
- Hypothermia (too low): Decreased perfusion/circulation, decreased blood pressure, organ failure, severely depressed mentation, death

Adult Cat/Dog normal: 99.5-102.5
Puppy/Kitten normal: 99.5-102.5
Neonate: 94-98

MM/CRT

- MM color gives us an idea of oxygenation levels, perfusion, and circulation
- CRT gives us an idea of perfusion and circulation
- MM colors: Pink, Light Pink, Pale, White, Cyanotic, Injected, Icteric
- If gums are pigmented: Check tongue, lower eyelid, vulva/prepuce

Adult Cat/Dog normal: MM: Pk, CRT: <2 sec
Puppy/Kitten: MM: Pk or Lt Pk, CRT: <2 sec

Blood Pressure, SPO2

- Blood pressure tells us the pressure caused by blood exerting force against the walls of blood vessels
 - Vasoconstriction vs Vasodilation
 - Medications and Disease processes will affect our BP
 - Doppler vs Oscillometric
 - Kidneys are not perfused with Systolic BP <60mmHg
 - BP too high: Hypertensive; BP too low: Hypotensive
 - Ideally taken in right lateral, upper front leg. Can be taken on rear leg and tail.
- SPO2 tells us the amount of Oxygen in the blood stream
 - Normal: Above 95%
 - Anemia and Heart rate will affect your SPO2
 - SPO2 too low: Hypoxic; Likely going to have pale/white/cyanotic MM
 - Attach your Pulse Ox to tongue, vulva, prepuce, between toes
 - If it's not working- wet the tongue with water