

Blood sampling in dogs



Some common questions

We would like your dog to come back to the surgery for a blood sample to be taken. The procedure takes only a few minutes, and will allow us to determine any treatment that may be required for your dog.

What do we test for?

Most blood samples are tested 'in house' at our surgery, although some may be sent to an outside laboratory.

We run a 'full profile', made up of three parts:

1. Haematology. This is where we look at the levels of the different cells in your dog's blood. Red blood cells carry oxygen in the blood, and too few of these will result in anaemia. White blood cells are usually a marker of infection or inflammation, whilst reduced numbers of platelets can lead to problems with blood clotting. We can also tell if the patient is dehydrated and needs extra fluid.

2. Biochemistry. Here we measure various different enzymes in the blood, which indicate whether your dog is suffering from problems with their kidney, liver or pancreas, or whether they have diabetes.

3 Electrolytes. This tells us about the levels of sodium, potassium and chloride within the body. An imbalance may need correcting and gives vital clues as to the underlying problem.

Not all blood tests are definitive, but they usually point us in the right direction. We may have to take further samples, which will be sent to an outside lab. Very occasionally some tests will require that your dog stays with us for a day for several samples to be taken, such as testing for an under active thyroid gland (hypothyroidism) or an over active adrenal gland (Cushings).

How is the blood taken?

A nurse will hold your dog while the blood sample is taken. Most dogs tolerate sampling very well, but if your pet becomes distressed, we may take them over to the surgical block where things are a little quieter.

Usually the sample will be taken from a leg vein, although occasionally, in small dogs, or if a large sample is required, the sample will be taken from the neck vein. A small area will be clipped of hair and swabbed.

We ask that you starve your dog for at least 8 hours before blood sampling, as eating in this period will increase the levels of certain enzymes in the blood and make interpretation of the results a lot more difficult.

When will you get the results?

For all tests done 'in house' we aim to get the results to you within 24 hours, whilst samples sent to outside labs generally take between 2 and 7 working days.

Please ensure that we have the correct contact telephone numbers for you in order to avoid delays in communicating results.

What is the cost of blood tests?

Samples sent to an outside lab are all priced differently and the exact cost may not be known until we get the results. We are always happy to provide an estimate of costs.

If you have any further questions, do not hesitate to ask your vet. We can be contacted on 01435 864422

