



ProTrainings

Vital Signs

Rectal Temperature for cats and dogs:

- Taking your pet's temperature using a rectal thermometer is the best way to know if your pet has a fever or if it is in hypothermia
- The best way to use a rectal thermometer is to lubricate it with Vaseline
- Measuring an animal's condition by whether it's nose is cool or warm is a misconception as the nose temperature doesn't always correlate with the bodily temperature
- On the other hand, warm ears can be an indication of fever and freezing ears can be an indication of hypothermia

Normal Temperature: 38°C – 39.1°C

Abnormal: Hypothermia T < 37.5°C

Abnormal: Hyperthermia T > 39.1°C

Colour of gums:

- Having a bright, pink gum colour indicates good blood circulation and oxygenation to the tissues
- Abnormal colours of the gums are dark red, grey, blue or white

Technique:

- Lift either of your pet's lips and observe the colour of the gums and inner lip. Healthy animals have pink colours to their lips. Other colours such as brick red or brown, pale light pink, white, yellow or blue colours of the mucous membranes indicate an emergency such as shock, loss of blood or anemia
- Certain breeds have a dark pigmentation in their gums and inner lips which may make this method inaccurate and give a misleading result. For these breeds gently pull down the skin below the eye and observe the colour of their inner eyelid

Dehydration:

- Dehydration can commonly occur if the animal has been vomiting or has had diarrhoea
- Grab the skin between the animal's shoulder blades, it should back bounce immediately after you release it. If the skin takes more than two seconds to bounce back or stays in the position while grasped is a sign of dehydration and means that the pet may need veterinary attention



Normal Heart Rate for cats and dogs:

- Cats: 110 – 130 bpm
- Puppies: 70 -120 bpm
- Dogs: 70 -180 bpm
- Toy breeds (small dogs): 70 – 220 bpm
- An animal's normal heart rate should comprise of 2 separate beats with a silent interval between them and a regular rhythm. If you have any doubts about your pet's heart rate you should seek veterinary care
- Heart rate can also be taken by finding the animal's pulse along the femoral artery in the inner thigh or underneath the arm

Respiratory Rate for cats and dogs:

Technique:

- Observe the animal's chest motion or place a wet finger over the nares
- Count the rate over 15 seconds and then multiply by four

Cats:

- Cats normal rate: 20 – 30 breaths per minute
- Cats panting: up to 300 pants per minute
- Cats don't usually pant unless they are in stressful situations such as hot weather or being frightened. They shouldn't pant for more than a few minutes at a time, if this happens and persists and the animal is struggling to return to a normal breathing pattern it should be treated as an emergency

Dogs:

- Puppies normal rate: 15 – 40 breaths per minute
- Dogs normal rate: 10 – 30 breaths per minute
- Toy breeds (small dogs) normal rate: 15- 40 breaths per minute
- Dogs panting – up to 200 pants per minute

Abnormal breathing:

- If the animal's abdomen is expanding instead of the chest on inhalation, your pet isn't breathing normally and you should seek veterinary care
- Abnormal respiratory rates, loud gasping sounds, shallow breathing or breathing with their mouth open should be treated as an emergency

