

Pre-Anesthetic Testing

What it is and Why Should I Consider it?

Pre-anesthetic testing involves taking a blood sample from your pet before it receives any anesthetic drugs. This sample can help us determine if your pet's organs are functioning adequately to process the anesthetic and whether they have any underlying issues we should be aware of before giving them an anesthetic drug. Among other things, the blood sample shows us:

- ❖ Kidney and Liver Enzymes – these are the major organs involved in breaking down and metabolizing drugs.
- ❖ Total Protein and Hematocrit levels – useful in determining that the animal is well hydrated.
- ❖ Red Blood Cell and Hemoglobin levels – necessary for carrying adequate oxygen through the body.
- ❖ White Blood Cell Count – can determine if there is any underlying infection
- ❖ Platelet Count – shows the blood's ability to clot.

This is just some of the very useful information that pre-anesthetic testing can give us. Changes in the tests do not necessarily mean your pet cannot have anesthetic, but they may lead us to use a different drug, to recommend fluid therapy during the procedure, or make other recommendations.

Also, if it turns out that your pet is perfectly healthy, now we have a picture of what his or her blood work looks like on a normal day. This can be very useful for comparison if your pet comes to see us because it is ill in the future.

The majority of our patients do have normal pre-anesthetic tests, but for those few who appear healthy on the outside, but have hidden problems inside, this testing can be very important or even life saving. No test can make anesthetic 100% safe, but we are happy to provide you with options for reducing potential risks. Please feel free to ask for more information!