CardioVetFocus

Did you know...

you can help you veterinarian treat your pet's heart disease by counting their breathing rate at home and watching for other indication (clinical signs) that your pet is not well ?

Learn to be part of your pet's care team !

Clinical signs that may be associated with heart disease or heart failure in dogs and cats
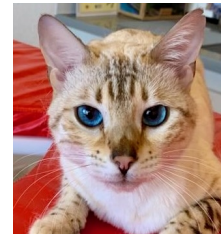
include:

• Rapid breathing at rest or sleep (> 30 breaths per minute)
• Effort during breathing
• Restless sleep and cannot find a comfortable position
• Coughing or choking
• Weakness
• Reduced ability to exercise
• Collapse or fainting
• Decreased appetite
• Weightloss
• Distended belly
• Depressed or calm and non-interactive attitude

Cats only
• Lameness, weakness or paralysis of the hind legs
• Pain

Why should I assess my pet's respiratory rate at home ?

An increase in your pet's breathing rate while resting or sleeping is a very important early clue (clinical sign) that your pet may be developing heart failure and should see your veterinarian. Since this is an early indicator of the development of heart failure, noticing it can help limit your pet's illness, reduce the chance that your pet will need to spend the night in the hospital and, therefore, to reduce the costs associated with the treatment.

What is a normal resting/sleeping breathing rate for dogs and cats ?

In general, all dogs and cats, with or without heart disease, have a respiratory rate between 15 and 30 breaths per minute. Lower levels are even possible and are not a concern as long as your pet is otherwise healthy. Respiration rates are much higher than this when dogs and cats are hot, stressed, or active, but that is normal.

How do I count my pet's rest/sleep respiratory rate ?

Wait until your pet is sleeping quietly (preferably) or resting calmly and quietly.
It is important that cats do not purr when you count their breathing rate.

When dogs or cats breathe their chest rises (inhale) and lowers (exhale).

A breath rate includes an inhale and an exhale and to measure it use your watch or phone to time 30 seconds and count the number of times the chest (or stomach) rises. Then multiply that number by 2 to get the number of breath rates performed per minute.

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*How to Calculate my Pet's
Home Breathing Rate*

**breaths in 30 sec x 2
= breaths per minute**

Normal less than 30 resting

Keep track of the respiratory rates you count by writing them down **on the sheet given to you** or on your calendar.

What should I do if my pet's resting/sleeping breathing rate is increased?

The first thing to do is to count it several times over the next two hours
to ensure that this is a consistent conclusion.
If the breathing rate is constantly increasing, you should contact your veterinarian as soon as possible

Note: If resting/sleeping respiratory rate is increased and other "clinical signs" as described above are also observed, the situation may represent an emergency. In this case, contact your attending veterinarian or his veterinary emergency service.

How often should I count rest/sleep breathing rate in my pet ?

Typically, your vet will ask you to count the breathing rate once a day, at the same time. This way, you and your veterinarian will be able to know your pet's actual resting/sleeping breathing rate.

If your pet has heart disease without symptoms:

It is important to monitor the respiratory rate of your animal at home in order to be able to evaluate the evolution of the disease. Monitoring will vary depending on the stage of the disease and the respiratory rates will be recorded once a week or once a month as appropriate.

☐ no symptoms

If your pet has heart failure:

Home respiratory rate should be assessed once a day in all animals with heart failure and who are currently taking medications such as diuretics.

☐ heart failure

Check the breathing rate at home with a free smartphone app?

There are free smartphone applications that can help you monitor your dog's breathing rate at home, such as "SuivieChienCeva".