Monitoring Your Pet’s Respiratory Rate At Home

A resting respiratory rate is the number of times your pet breathes in and out during a minute when at rest or sleeping (as opposed to when active or playing, or even when dreaming).

For pets with significant heart disease and a risk of developing congestive heart failure (fluid in or around the lungs), monitoring their resting respiratory rate can help us catch the earliest signs of congestive heart failure, before developing into an emergency situation where treatment with hospitalization and oxygen therapy may be needed.

**How to measure your pet’s resting respiratory rate:**

1. Wait until your pet is sleeping soundly (i.e. not dreaming), and not panting or purring.

2. Count the number of times the chest rises and falls (1 full rise and fall equals 1 breath) over 60 seconds.

3. Do this at least once a day for 7 days, and record your pet’s resting respiratory rate on your calendar.

This will help you determine your pet’s average resting respiratory rate.
Most dogs and cats have a normal resting respiratory rate in the mid-teens to mid-20s breaths per minute. In general, a resting respiratory rate over 35-40 breaths per minute is considered abnormal. Specifically, for your individual pet, any increase which is more than 20% above their average resting respiratory rate is considered abnormal.

If you discover an elevated resting respiratory rate in your pet (without any evidence of difficulty breathing, increase in cough or change in character of cough), recheck their resting respiratory rate again in 30-60 minutes.

If their resting respiratory rate remains elevated, please contact your veterinarian or the cardiology service at Blue Pearl veterinary hospital as soon as possible. At any time, if your pet has an increase in respiratory effort, increase in cough or change in character of cough, or if your pet has a productive cough, please contact your veterinarian of the cardiology service at your nearest BluePearl veterinary hospital immediately.

Learn more about this disease by contacting our Cardiology service at your nearest BluePearl veterinary hospital. For a list of hospital locations, please visit www.bluepearlvet.com.