



Blood Donor Program FAQs

What does the screening process involve?

We take both the safety of our donors and the safety of our blood products very seriously. One of our clinicians will perform a complete physical exam on your pet to make sure they are healthy enough to donate blood. If no abnormalities are noted during the physical exam, we will submit a comprehensive lab work screening. It can take up to two weeks to receive the full lab work results due to the extensive infectious disease panels we run. You will be contacted once the lab work results are in and in addition, a copy of the report will be sent to your regular veterinarian.

How often can my pet donate?

Your pet regenerates red blood cells quickly enough for them to safely donate blood every 4 to 6 weeks. We try, if possible, to keep the donation schedule to every 6 weeks. During times of high demand, however, we may request some pets donate every 4 weeks.

How will I know when to bring in my pet to donate?

We will call you and set up a time for your pet to come in and donate. We keep a small supply of blood on hand in our hospital, at all times, which allows us to be flexible when it comes to scheduling donations. Occasionally, we have emergency situations and need blood immediately for a patient in the hospital. If you are able to come in during a crisis, it is greatly appreciated! If you cannot come in, do not worry. We will, hopefully, have other donors we can call and there will certainly be future opportunities for your pet to donate.

Will my pet be sedated?

The majority of our donors do require mild sedation for their safety and ours. All of our protocols are designed by our board certified Anesthesiologist. Your pet may appear slightly sedated for the next 12-24 hours, if sedation persists past this period please contact us.

What does the donation process involve?

When your pet arrives, we will check their temperature, heart rate, respiratory rate and obtain a current weight. We will draw a small amount of blood and check their packed cell volume and total solids. The packed cell volume is a measurement of their red blood cells and lets us know if they have regenerated enough red blood cells to donate again. If sedation is needed, a doctor will assess your pet and write a drug protocol. Their neck will be shaved over their jugular vein. First, the area is surgically scrubbed to ensure an aseptic blood draw. We draw 53mL of blood from our feline donors and 450mL of blood from our canine donors. After the blood draw, your pet will be fed a small meal. Please let us know ahead of time if he or she has any dietary restrictions.

Do I need to restrict my pet's activity level after donating blood?

Just like a person, your pet may be a little lethargic for the remainder of the day after donating blood. Allow your pet to set their own activity level. Put off long walks or trips to the dog park until the next day.

For more information, please contact our Blood Bank Coordinators at BloodBank@vravet.com.