



## Pre-anaesthetic Blood Screening

At Turramurra Veterinary Hospital, our pathology suite includes the ability to run blood tests on site and get immediate results. In addition to blood testing when a pet is unwell, there are also wellness screens available, which are helpful in finding abnormalities that are **not possible to detect on physical examination**. One of the tests available to clients is a pre-anaesthetic blood screen for their pet.

### ***What does a pre-anaesthetic blood screen test for?***

The pre-anaesthetic blood test consists of both biochemical parameters (organ health) and haematology (blood cells). Biochemistry includes **kidney** parameters (urea, creatinine) and **liver** enzymes (ALT, ALP), glucose and protein levels. Haematology includes **red and white blood cell** counts as well as **platelet** counts. If the red blood cell count is low, this is indicative of anaemia, whereas if it is elevated, dehydration may be present. The white blood cells can be elevated if there is inflammation or infection present.

### ***My pet is young and physically healthy, so should my pet have a pre-anaesthetic blood test?***

A pre-anaesthetic in a young healthy animal is an **elective** test that owners can request rather than a requirement for a procedure to go ahead. The advantage is that this blood test provides a **baseline** so that we know what your pet's normal values are, providing a reference **for comparison** if he or she becomes unwell in the future.

In rare instances, a congenital issue or disease condition is uncovered, such as a portosystemic shunt, kidney disease or anaemia. In these cases, the owner is alerted promptly as to the clinician's recommendations.

### ***What are the benefits of a pre-anaesthetic blood test for my senior pet?***

A pre-anaesthetic blood screen enables the vet to determine your pet's health status, particularly in terms of liver and kidney function, both crucial in **metabolising the anaesthetic**. Although these tests cannot guarantee the absence of complications, it will provide the vet with more information so that the anaesthetic protocol can be chosen accordingly.

In **senior pets**, your vet may **include the pre-anaesthetic blood test** in your treatment plan because the health status will influence the **anaesthetic** and **post-operative plan**. You may wish to discuss these recommendations with your vet during the morning of the procedure.

A blood test to screen for disease annually in a pet is the equivalent of a human having a blood test every 7 years, given the shorter life-span in cats and dogs.

Changes to parameters found during a pre-anaesthetic blood screen can provide clinicians with a **head-start on disease detection**, often prior to obvious clinical signs detected by owners. Sometimes a change in just one of the biochemical parameters is a **red flag** indicating



further diagnostic investigation is indicated, such as Cushing's syndrome or anaemia in dogs and chronic kidney disease or hyperthyroidism in cats. These are all common problems seen in older pets.

### ***How is a blood sample taken from my pet?***

Blood is routinely collected from either the jugular vein from cats and dogs, or sometimes the cephalic vein in the fore limb in larger dogs. The majority of pets require minimal restraint and are comfortable during blood collection. Our nurses are experts at distraction and **gentle handling** to ensure your pet is as comfortable as possible. Sometimes blood is taken after their pre-anaesthetic **sedative** (premedication) is given.

### ***What happens if there is an abnormality detected on the pre-anaesthetic blood test?***

It is **common** to have **some results outside of the reference range** and the majority of these are minor and insignificant. However, occasionally an abnormality is detected which may change our approach to your pet's anaesthetic, such as: drug selection, fluid therapy rates or follow-up recommendations to screen for disease.

### ***What is the cost of a pre-anaesthetic blood test?***

The cost of a pre-anaesthetic blood test at Turramurra Veterinary Hospital is \$139.

It is completely normal to feel apprehensive about leaving your pet with us and clients are encouraged to ask their vet any further questions or concerns they may have about their pet's procedure.