



State Road Veterinary Clinic

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Pre-Anesthetic Blood Testing and Why Your Dog/Cat Should be Tested Prior to Surgery

To ensure that your pet can properly process and eliminate anesthetic agents, we recommend and highly encourage that your pet have pre-anesthetic blood testing performed prior to any anesthetic procedure. These tests allow us to assess how your pet's organs are functioning. It may reveal a hidden health problem that could put your pet at risk.

This is especially important for older pets. Older pets are more likely to have underlying organ problems. If the results are normal we can proceed with the procedure. If the results are abnormal, we may need to simply change the type of anesthesia used or cancel the procedure and run further tests to evaluate the extent of the problem and initiate appropriate treatment. While there is no guarantee that blood testing will reveal all illnesses that a pet may have, it will allow us to catch many problems that could be adversely affected by anesthesia.

Pre-anesthetic blood work is also important for our younger pets. Some pets are born with genetic or congenital organ problems that may not show symptoms until later in life. These conditions however, can be worsened by anesthesia or even result in death. The pre-anesthetic blood work allows us to catch these problems before your pet goes under anesthesia.

Most anesthetic agents are processed or eliminated through the liver and kidneys. If they are not functioning properly, your pet will be unable to process or eliminate them properly. This could result in your pet waking up slower from anesthesia or worse. In some instances, we simply need to change the anesthetic protocol.

There are several blood screens that can be run prior to anesthesia. For pets under 7 years of age that are having a routine procedure performed (spay, neuter, declaw) we recommend a 6-chemistry and packed cell volume. For pets over 7 years of age, dental procedures, and more complicated procedures, we recommend a 12-chemistry, complete blood count, and electrolytes. These tests check for evidence of kidney and liver disease and also check for signs of anemia. The 12-chemistry, complete blood count and electrolytes give us a more in depth look at your pet's overall health and organ function.

Dogs should also be current on a heartworm test before going under anesthesia. Heartworm disease places your dog at a higher risk for recovery. Depending on the procedure to be performed, it is recommended that your dog undergo heartworm treatment to kill the heartworms prior to going under anesthesia.

Cats should be tested for feline leukemia and FIV prior to undergoing anesthesia. These viruses compromise the immune system and could complicate recovery.

If you are interested in pre-anesthetic blood testing please let us know. Your pet will need to come in 2-3 days prior to their procedure to ensure we have results back from the lab.