

SLEEPING RESPIRATORY RATE

Why measure Sleeping Respiratory Rate:

Measuring the Sleeping Respiratory Rate (SRR) at home is a very sensitive indicator of developing pulmonary edema or pleural effusion (fluid on the chest) in dogs and cats. This can be a very useful home monitoring tool especially when monitoring for the advancement of cardiovascular disease in dogs and cats. It should be noted that heart disease is not the only reason the respiratory rate may be elevated.

How to measure the Sleeping Respiratory Rate:

With your pet at rest and preferably sleeping, count the number of respirations in a one minute time period. Count each breath "in and out" as one breath and count those over a 60 second period. (It can be helpful to record these numbers on a calendar so you can monitor and keep track on a regular basis.) Although this can be done as a Resting Respiratory Rate, measuring the respirations asleep removes the variables of pain or discomfort and, to a large degree, temperature.

What are normal Sleeping Respiratory Rate numbers:

The normal Sleeping Respiratory Rate varies between animals but typically falls between 15 - 23 breaths per minute. What we are looking for is a significant change from your pet's normal. Consistent SRR above 30 needs medical investigation and can be a sign of either heart or respiratory disease.

What else to monitor:

Cats often have very subtle changes in demeanor or respiration prior to congestive heart failure; therefore, monitoring appetite, activity and weight in cats with known heart disease is very important. Although cats cough infrequently with heart disease, it is relatively common, although variable in dogs with congestive heart failure.