

What to expect when your cat is enrolled in Angell's Blood Donor Program?

Screening Procedure

1. We will bring you and your cat back to our blood donation room for a physical examination* and blood draw as well as to get both of you used to the space and table where the blood donation will happen.
2. We will obtain 2-4 tubes of blood for an initial screening of general health and infectious diseases. The results are usually available in 2-3 days. These bloodwork except for blood type will be repeated every year that your pet is in the program but can be done in conjunction with a blood donation.
3. Part of the bloodwork will include a blood test for heart disease called SNAP pro-BNP. This does not replace an echocardiogram (ultrasound of the heart) by a cardiologist to assess the heart but is a quick way to determine if there is any concern for your pet's heart that may require additional work-up.

Scheduling a Blood Donation

1. By enrolling your pet in our blood donor program, you are committing to at least 3 blood donations per year with a minimum of 8 weeks between each donation.
2. We will call or email you at least a week ahead to schedule a blood donation appointment. Please update us at this time if there have been any changes to your pet's health at this time as we may want to either delay the blood donation or graduate your pet from our blood donor program.
3. All our cats are sedated for the blood donation procedure. You are welcome to be present for the duration of the procedure or drop them off in the morning and we will call you when the blood donation is done and they are ready for pick up.
4. We also highly encourage pre-visit sedation with Gabapentin the night before and the morning of a blood donation to minimize the amount of injectable sedatives needed for the procedure. We will provide this medication prior to their blood donation.

Blood Donation Procedure

1. The whole blood donation procedure typically takes approximately 1-2 hours.
2. Your cat (and you, if you would like to be present) will be brought to our blood donation room and a quick physical exam will be performed. We will have a short questionnaire for you to fill out at this time regarding your pet's health as well as some reminders regarding the blood donation procedure.
3. Once your pet is deemed ready to donate blood, we will place an IV catheter and administer sedatives through the catheter. Some cats do not tolerate being restrained for IV catheter placement, so we might opt to give the sedatives intramuscularly first prior to placing the catheter.

4. Once your cat is sedate, an area on the side of their neck will be shaved and cleaned with antiseptic wipes.
5. A needle attached to a line that leads to a syringe and collection bag will be introduced into the jugular vein (largest vein in the neck) and 50 to 60 ml of blood (approximately 3-4 tablespoons) will be collected from your cat depending on their weight.
6. The blood collection usually takes approximately 5-10 minutes.
7. Once the blood collection is complete, a pressure wrap will be placed around your cat's neck and they will be given some fluids under the skin. The pressure wrap can be removed in approximately 30 minutes.
8. We will offer your cat a snack once they're awake so please let us know of any dietary restrictions.

At-Home Care Post-Donation

1. Please monitor your pet closely, especially during the first 24 hours after their blood donation. If they have persistent decreased appetite, lethargy, vomiting, diarrhea or if you are at all concerned about how your pet is doing, please let us know.
2. If they received any sedatives for the blood donation, they may be wobbly after they go home so please keep them off furniture and may need help with stairs. They should be back to themselves by the next day.
3. Please also monitor the blood collection site for any redness, swelling, pain or discharge. If seen, please take a picture and contact us for further advice. For example, they may be sensitive to the standard antiseptic wipes used to clean their skin and may need an alternative solution for their next donation.

**This does not take the place of your regular annual examination with your primary veterinarian.*