

BLUE RIDGE VETERINARY BLOOD BANK

120 EAST CORNWELL LANE PURCELLVILLE, VA 20132 1-800-949-3822 WWW.BRVBB.COM

Could your dog be a life saver? Canine Blood Donor Program Information

Could your dog become a life saver?

A donation of blood means giving the gift of life to an animal that is sick or injured. The demand for blood products continues to increase, and we need the help of willing canine volunteers to meet this need. Give your dog a chance to be someone's hero. We are the largest veterinary blood bank and our standards are providing the leading edge for the industry. Our canine donor base consists of ALL volunteer donors – no cages or no compounds of caged dogs! Just real dogs living in real homes that make periodic visits from your loving homes, into the hands of our specially trained and caring staff.

Why do dogs need blood transfusions?

Dogs may need blood transfusions for different reasons. Your dog's blood is made of red blood cells, white blood cells, platelets and plasma. Blood can be separated into these various components so that the specific transfusion needs of your dog can be met. The most common transfusions involved the use of red blood cells or plasma. Red blood cells are used in the treatment of anemia (low red blood cell count), following an accident or during surgery when blood is lost, when your dog's body cannot produce enough red blood cells by itself or when diseases cause the body to destroy its own red blood cells.

Plasma contains proteins or enzymes which help to clot the blood. It can be used to treat bleeding due to liver disease or bleeding seen with the accidental ingestion of rodent poisons. Plasma is also used when the protein or albumin of the patient becomes very low. Another component of plasma, cryoprecipitate, is used in the treatment of hemophilia or in other inherited bleeding problems.

Do dogs have blood types?

Blood types are determined by molecules (proteins and carbohydrates) on the surface of the red blood cells. Dogs have at least six characterized blood types, also known as dog erythrocyte antigens (aka DEA). The antigens are DEA 1.1, 1.2, 3, 4, 5 and 7. The blood type considered most important in dogs is DEA 1.1. Dogs can either be negative or positive for DEA 1.1. Dogs that are negative for DEA 1.1 and the majority of other blood types are considered "universal" blood donors. Dogs that are positive for DEA 1.1 can only give blood safely to dogs that are also DEA 1.1 positive. The majority of dogs are DEA 1.1 positive and only a SMALL percentage of dogs are "universal" donors.

Donor dogs must be:

- Healthy and happy
- Greater than 35lbs
- Between 9 months and 7 ½ yrs of age.
- Able to lay still for 10 minutes (with help)
- Up to date on rabies and DHLPPV
- Current on monthly flea/tick heartworm preventatives year round
- Not on any long term medications (exceptions apply)

What is a donation like?

Our donors come in once every 5-7 weeks to donate blood. We ask that families that decide to join the program commit to 5-8 donations a year. Some families that come see us every 6 weeks donate in upwards of 9 times a year! We use the same equipment that is used in human medicine. Blood is collected from the jugular vein and takes between 5-10 minutes. We take between 225mls and 450mls depending on your dog's size and temperament, which equates to 1-2 measuring cups. After the collection the dogs get lots of treats and praise as well as a high energy meal. The total time your dog spends with us is about 20 minutes!

What happens to the blood?

After the whole blood is collected, it is spun in a centrifuge to separate the red cells from the plasma. We can process two units of packed red blood cells and plasma from one 450mls donation. This means a single donation could potentially help save 4 dogs! Packed red blood cells can be kept refrigerated for 5 weeks and plasma can be kept frozen for 1-5 years.

Since we make such a large investment in your pet to screen and qualify them as a donor, we ask that you make the commitment to volunteer donations consistently.

We can't say Thank You enough; We would not be able to do it without each and every one of our LIFE SAVERS!