

## **How to: Measure your pet's sleeping respiratory rate**



If your dog has a heart murmur, measuring their sleeping respiratory rate is a great way to evaluate possible progression of their disease at home. It is free, takes one minute a week, and your dog will be asleep when it is happening! Here are the steps:

1. We want the slowest rate we can get. Be sure your dog is sound asleep and not dreaming.
2. Watch your dog inhale, then exhale. That cycle is one breath. The next inhale starts the second breath.
3. Count how many times your dog breathes for one minute. If your dog is a shallow breather and you can only get a good 30 second stretch, that is just fine. Multiply your thirty second count by 2 to get the rate for one minute.
4. Do this once a week on the same day, for example every Wednesday night.
5. Record the values.
6. Most dogs will have values less than thirty, some much less than thirty.
7. While it is good to know what values are considered normal, we are interested in comparing your pet's rate now to your pet's prior rate.
8. If the values are 25% greater than they have been, let us know. It might be time to re-evaluate your pet's heart. A 25% or greater increase in sleeping respiratory rate can mean that your pet is having to breathe more to compensate for a change in how well their heart is functioning. An example of a 25 % increase is going from an average rate of 20 to an average rate of 25.
9. If you think at any time that your pet is in distress or having trouble breathing, call us or an emergency service.

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