



Kalihi Pet Clinic

Monitor Your Pets Respiratory Rate

A **resting respiratory rate** is the number of times your pet takes a complete breath within one minute while at rest or sleeping.

It is important to monitor respiratory rate in dogs and cats with significant heart conditions (heart murmur, heart disease, and risk of developing congestive heart failure). Monitoring the breathing rate will definitely help catch early signs of congestive heart failure (CHF) before it could develop and become an emergency situation. Animals with CHF will require emergency hospitalization and oxygen therapy.

How to Measure your Dog's and Cat's Sleeping Respiratory Rate

1. Your pet should be completely asleep and NOT dreaming, panting, or purring.
 2. Count the number of times the chest rises and falls per minute (*1 breath **equals** one complete rise and one complete fall of the chest*). Count how many breaths occur in 30 seconds. Then multiply the number of breaths that you counted in 30 seconds by 2 to get the number of breaths in 1 minute. Alternately, you can count the number of breaths that occur in 1 minute and then there is no need to multiply.
 3. Do this everyday or at least twice every seven days. Record the respiratory rate on a calendar or journal. This will help you determine your pet's average resting respiratory rate.
 4. ***Sleeping respiratory rate should be under 30 breaths per minute. If sleeping respiratory rate is over 30 breaths per minute and constantly elevating, report to your Veterinarian or the cardiology service at an emergency center as soon as possible.*** X-rays are usually suggested for further evaluation of the heart and lungs.
- **Normal Breathing Rate:** OVER 15 and UNDER 30 breaths per minute.
 - **Abnormal Breathing Rate:** OVER 30 breaths pre minute.

Technique: If having a difficult time counting the sleeping breathing rate in person, it is suggested to use a recording device (smart phone) to record the breathing of your dog or cat for one minute. You can watch the video and count the sleeping breathing rate accurately. Another option is **free smartphone apps** for iPhones and Androids that can help you count and keep track of your dog's or cat's sleeping breathing rate. Search the app store for 'dog's breathing rate' and a variety of apps will appear.

Clinical signs associated with heart disease or heart failure in dogs and cats, include:

- Fast breathing when resting or sleeping (> 30 breaths per minute)
- Restless sleeping, moving around a lot and changing positions
- Coughing or gagging
- Reduced ability to exercise or weak
- Collapse or fainting
- Decreased appetite and Weight loss
- Distended abdomen

Cat only:

- Hind leg weakness
- Hind end paralysis
- Signs of Pain

For additional information on this subject, visit your veterinarian or a specialist.