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My pet requires a urine sample – what can I expect?

How can I get a urine sample from my pet?

Urine samples are collected in a number of different ways, depending on the species of your pet, his/her temperament, and what tests are required.

For some tests, you may be able to obtain the sample at home, patient depending! For dogs, a clean tray, jug or even saucepan can be used to catch a small sample as your pet squats or cocks his leg. It is important that we assess the sample quickly to avoid misinterpreting any changes; we advise you to obtain the sample during normal working hours and drop it into our surgery straight away rather than refrigerating the sample which can affect the results. Ideally a morning sample is best, and taken 'mid-flow'. For cats, we would suggest keeping your cat in overnight, separate from any other pets, with a litter tray containing a non-absorbable litter such as KatKor®. When your cat urinates in the tray, the urine will float amongst the non-absorbable beads, and this pack of litter which you can purchase from our surgery contains a pipette and pot that enables you to cleanly collect a small sample. Again, we do require the sample at the earliest opportunity, so if the sample is collected overnight, do remember to bring it down to our surgery first thing the following morning, and again, do not refrigerate the sample.

If a urinary tract infection is suspected, a sterile urine sample is required: voided urine will naturally contain some bacteria that will contaminate the sample. To obtain a sterile sample, a procedure called a **cystocentesis** is performed. This involves placing a fine needle into your pet's bladder. Most pets tolerate this procedure very well indeed, but if your pet is particularly jumpy, we may recommend light sedation in order to avoid any trauma to the bladder lining. This is, however, an unusual requirement.

Will I have to leave my pet at the vets?

If your vet recommends a cystocentesis sample be taken during your appointment, it may be possible to perform whilst you wait. We will ask you to take a seat in our waiting room whilst your pet is taken to a quiet room for the sample to be taken. One of our nurses will gently hold your pet whilst a vet takes the sample. The procedure normally only takes a few minutes. However, the test does require your pet's bladder to be at least moderately full, and if not, your vet may suggest hospitalizing your pet for a few hours or re-arranging the test for another day when you can avoid taking your pet out prior to the appointment to encourage a full bladder! If your pet does stay with us, he/she will stay in an individual kennel with a soft bed and water and receive plenty of tender loving care!

When will I get the results?

For tests on 'free-catch' samples, you will often receive the results the same day. These tests involve looking at urine concentration, a dipstick test, and examination under the microscope for the presence of certain crystals. Sterile samples obtained via cystocentesis can be tested for bacteria and can help choose the most appropriate antibiotic for your pet's condition. Because this test has to be sent to an external laboratory and any bacteria need time to grow to be identified, there will be a few days wait for these results.