

Cat Bloodwork: Understanding Your Cat's Health

Bloodwork is an essential tool in evaluating your cat's overall health. It helps us detect underlying conditions early, monitor ongoing health issues, and determine if your cat is healthy for anesthesia or treatment. Below is an overview of what we test for, normal values, and what we do if results are abnormal.

Complete Blood Count (CBC): evaluates your cat's red and white blood cells, as well as platelets, providing insight into infections, anemia, and clotting disorders.

Red Blood Cells (RBCs) (Normal: 5.0-10.0 million/ μ L): Tests for anemia, dehydration, or blood loss.

If high: we assess for dehydration or potential underlying diseases.

If low: we investigate anemia causes such as kidney disease, chronic illness, or bone marrow disorders.

White Blood Cells (WBCs) (Normal: 5,500-19,500/ μ L): Tests for infection, inflammation, stress response, or immune disorders.

If high: we consider infection, inflammation, or stress-related causes.

If low: we assess for immune suppression, viral infections, or bone marrow disease.

Platelets (Normal: 200,000-600,000/ μ L): Tests for clotting ability and potential bleeding disorders.

If high: we assess for inflammation, infection, or certain cancers.

If low: we recheck to rule out platelet clumping, perform clotting tests, or assess for immune-mediated diseases.

Electrolytes: Regulate bodily functions such as hydration, nerve function, and muscle contraction.

Sodium (Na) (Normal: 145-158 mEq/L): Tests for hydration, kidney disease, or endocrine disorders.

If high: we assess for dehydration or endocrine disease.

If low: we investigate kidney disease, Addison's disease, or overhydration.

Potassium (K) (Normal: 3.5-5.8 mEq/L): Tests for kidney disease, Addison's disease, or muscle function.

If high: we assess for kidney disease, urinary obstruction, or adrenal disease.

If low: we consider dehydration, vomiting, or adrenal gland disorders.

Chloride (Cl) (Normal: 107-129 mEq/L): Tests for acid-base balance, kidney, and metabolic health.

If high: we check for dehydration or metabolic imbalances.

If low: we evaluate vomiting, kidney issues, or metabolic disorders.

Kidney Function: These tests evaluate how well the kidneys are filtering waste from the blood.

Blood Urea Nitrogen (BUN) (Normal: 14-36 mg/dL): Tests for kidney function, dehydration, or liver disease.

If high: we consider kidney disease, dehydration, or high protein diets.

If low: we assess for liver disease or malnutrition.

Creatinine (CREA) (Normal: 0.6-2.4 mg/dL)

Tests for kidney function and muscle metabolism.

If high: we monitor trends, perform urinalysis, and may recommend diet changes or fluid therapy.

If low: we check for muscle loss or liver disease.

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SDMA (Symmetric Dimethylarginine): Tests for early detection of kidney disease.

If high: we evaluate kidney function further.

If low: no clinical significance.

Liver Function: These tests assess the liver's ability to process waste, store nutrients, and aid digestion.

Alanine Aminotransferase (ALT) (Normal: 12-130 U/L): Tests for liver cell damage.

If high: we recommend liver ultrasound or additional blood tests.

If low: no clinical significance.

Alkaline Phosphatase (ALP) (Normal: 14-111 U/L): Tests for liver or bone disease.

If high: we evaluate for liver disease, metabolic disorders, or bone issues.

If low: no clinical significance.

Bilirubin (TBIL) (Normal: 0.0-0.9 mg/dL): Tests for liver disease or bile duct obstruction.

If high: we may recommend imaging and bile acid testing.

If low: no clinical significance.

Glucose (GLU) (Normal: 65-150 mg/dL): Tests for diabetes, stress response, or metabolic disorders.

If high: we perform a fructosamine test to confirm diabetes.

If low: we investigate insulinoma, sepsis, or other metabolic conditions.

Thyroid Function

Total T4 (TT4) (Normal: 0.8-4.7 µg/dL): Tests for hyperthyroidism in older cats.

If high: we confirm hyperthyroidism with further testing.

If low: we assess for non-thyroidal illness or rare cases of hypothyroidism.

FeLV/FIV Testing

Sometimes we test for Feline Leukemia Virus (FeLV) and Feline Immunodeficiency Virus (FIV), especially in cats that are sick, newly adopted, or at risk due to outdoor exposure. These viruses affect the immune system and can lead to chronic infections or other health complications.

What Happens If Bloodwork Is Abnormal?

If we find abnormalities, we will discuss the results with you and recommend further testing if needed. Depending on the findings, treatment may include dietary changes, medications, hydration therapy, or monitoring trends over time.

Routine bloodwork is an essential part of keeping your cat healthy. If you have any questions about your cat's bloodwork or recommended follow-up, please contact us at:

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