

Monitoring your cat's heart health

SLEEPING RESPIRATORY RATE (SRR)



1. How to measure your pet's SRR?

One of the most important things to monitor in your pet when they are being treated for congestive heart failure is their **Sleeping Respiratory Rate (SRR)**. You can easily measure this at home and it is best to do this when your pet is asleep.

Recording their SRR allows your vet to monitor for any development of **congestive heart failure**, including signs of pulmonary oedema (fluid in the lungs) or pleural effusion (fluid around the lungs).

Measure the Sleeping Respiratory Rate (SRR) by counting the number of breaths your pet takes in one minute:

*Each time your pet takes a breath in and a breath out, this counts as a **single breath**. You can watch their chest rise and then fall – this rise and fall motion is one breath.*

*Count the **total number of breaths in one minute** (breaths/min). It is OK to count for 20 seconds and multiply that number by three, to give the total number of breaths per minute (60 seconds).*

Please record the SRR when your pet is settled and asleep in a room of a comfortable temperature.

Count your pet's SRR every day and record your results in a table like the one on this leaflet.

Your vet may also be able to recommend a SRR app that you can download. This can help you to count and share your pet's SRR results with your vet.

2. What is the normal SRR?

Normal SRR for cats is under 30 breaths/min.

Consistently **increased SRR** of over 35 breaths/min in pets with underlying heart disease can suggest that your pet has fluid in the lungs or around the lungs. They may need additional medication or a higher dose of existing medication to manage

this. **Please contact your vet if your pet's SRR is consistently over 35 breaths/min.**

If the SRR varies or changes substantially between measurements, please repeat the measurement to confirm the change. **If this change is persistent for more than 1–2 days, please contact your vet to discuss this further.**

Please also contact your vet if you notice **an increase in the effort associated with breathing** even if the SRR remains below 30 breaths/min.

3. What else should you look for?

Cats with congestive heart failure do not typically cough. Cats are less likely to show signs of illness than dogs, so subtle changes in appetite, exercise or demeanour should be closely monitored for. ■



