

## Vital statistics of Dogs and Cats

There are several areas on the dog's body where you may be able to feel the pulse. A pulse occurs with every heart beat. Sometimes, you can just place your hands low on your dog's chest, near the elbow joint, and feel the heart beats. You can count how many beats you feel in 15 seconds and then multiply it by 4. That will give you the pulse.

A second place to find the pulse is high on the inner side of the thigh. You will be feeling for the femoral artery. Place two fingers on the middle of the thigh near where the leg joins the body. What you feel is the 'femoral pulse.' The femoral pulse can be very difficult to feel in cats.

It is always best to use your fingers to feel the pulse. If you use your thumb, and press too hard, what you feel will actually be your own pulse.

The normal pulse for a dog - 70 to 180 beats per minute.  
In general, the larger the dog, the slower the pulse.

Puppies have a fast pulse, up to 220 beats per minute.

Cats usually have a pulse of 120-240 beats per minute.

The pulse of a dog is not always steady. Sometimes, the rate changes as the dog breathes in and out. The pulse will be faster on inspiration and slower on expiration. This is normal and is called sinus arrhythmia.



### Normal Pulse

Cats	150-200 bpm
Small dogs	90-120 bpm
Medium dogs	70-110 bpm
Large dogs	60-90 bpm

**Average temperature** for a dog or cat is 100.5 to 102.5 degrees F.

**Breaths:** Dogs: 10-30 a minute    Cats: 10-40 a minute

### Heartbeat:

- For dogs weighing 30 lbs. or less, the average heart rate is 100 to 160 beats per minute.
- For dogs weighing more than 30 lbs., average heart rate is 60 to 100 beats per minute.
- A puppy up to 1 year of age has an average heart rate of 120 to 160 beats per minute.
- A cat has an average heart rate of 160 to 220 beats per minute.

**Dehydration:** Look for visible signs. These symptoms include sunken eyes, exhaustion or dry mouth. Test your dog or cat's skin elasticity. Gently pull the skin near the middle of [your pet's](#) back. If he is dehydrated, then the skin won't have its usual elasticity. It will "tent".

Check the gums. Expose the gums and press them gently and briefly with your thumb. Blood is forced through the gum and should return to its normal color within 2 seconds. If it does not, then it could be a sign.