

Dogs as Blood Donors

By Comfort for Critters

If you've ever donated blood, you understand just how easy it is and how life-saving it can be. Did you know your dog can donate too? There is a constant need for canine blood, for the same reasons human blood is such a precious commodity. It's used to help sick and injured dogs, and can save a life when a pet needs surgery or a transfusion.

Canine blood only lasts about a month, so a constant supply is always in demand. There are five major canine blood types, with one type being a "universal donor" - the most sought after for donations. As with human blood, canine blood is tested to make sure the donor is disease-free. The donor dog also needs to have a calm temperament and be receptive to the idea (ie. not afraid during routine vet trips).

Typically the process of donating blood takes about 30-45 minutes...during which time the donor is shamelessly spoiled. Hugs, petting, treats and peanut butter provide a constant source of comfort and a much-earned "thank you"!

"I think that people are much more understanding these days of the fact that humans and animals have the same needs, medically speaking," said Jean Dodds, D.V.M., who founded Hemopet, an animal blood bank in California. There are other blood banks around the country. To find one near you, contact your local veterinarian, veterinary school, emergency animal clinic or check out the Humane Society of the US (humanesociety.org) for more information. Each state also has regulations that cover who can donate, so be sure to ask about those as well. This process might not be for everyone, or every dog that is. For those pups who are comfortable making this donation, they just might save a life!

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