



# 6 Tips for Cats

## from the AAHA Fluid Therapy Guidelines

**W**e all know that cats are not small dogs, and that holds true for fluid therapy as well. Here are some fluid therapy tips tailored for our feline companions from the *2024 AAHA Fluid Therapy Guidelines for Dogs and Cats*.

**1** Fluid resuscitation rates in cats differ from dogs, and cats can be more vulnerable to fluid overload from resuscitation. Correct hypovolemia in cats by administering a buffered isotonic fluid bolus of 5-10 mL/kg over 15-30 minutes and repeat if hemodynamic and perfusion parameters have not normalized.

**2** Hypothermia is commonly seen in cats with shock and aggressive, high rates of fluid resuscitation in hypotensive, hypothermic cats can lead to fluid overload. Administering 5 mL/kg IV fluid boluses along with active rewarming and rigorous reassessment is an essential part of fluid resuscitation in cats.

**3** Always consider a patient's sodium concentration when administering fluid therapy and select fluids based on the patient's needs. Cats, on average, have a higher blood sodium concentration (~155 mEq/L) than dogs (~145 mEq/L).

**4** For a cat with normal renal and cardiac function, initiate fluids under anesthesia at a rate of 3-5 mL/kg/hr. Offer food and water as soon as possible post-anesthesia and watch for a rapid return to eating and drinking. For most patients, withholding water prior to anesthesia is not necessary.

**5** Monitor cats closely for fluid overload when under anesthesia. Cats in particular may develop a Gallop sound or new murmur in addition to other signs: edematous tissues, chemosis, clear nasal discharge, pulmonary crackles, low oxygen saturation, pleural effusion, and ascites.

**6** Balanced isotonic electrolyte solutions for resuscitation contain only a small amount of potassium (4-5 mEq/L). Several studies have concluded that potassium-containing isotonic fluids are not detrimental for fluid resuscitation and rehydration in hyperkalemic cats with urethral obstruction. ■

**The 2024 Fluid Therapy Guidelines for Dogs and Cats are available at [aaha.org/fluid-therapy](https://aaha.org/fluid-therapy).**

These guidelines were prepared by a Task Force of experts convened by the American Animal Hospital Association (AAHA) and were subjected to a formal peer-review process. This document is intended as a guideline only, not an AAHA standard of care. These guidelines and recommendations should not be construed as dictating an exclusive protocol, course of treatment, or procedure. Variations in practice may be warranted based on the needs of the individual patient, resources, and limitations unique to each individual practice setting. ©2024 AAHA.

