ANIMAL BLOOD BANK®

Lessons in Lifesaving
1-800-2 HELP K9
1-800-243-5759

"Blood Banking for Every Hospital" Series
Title: MUCOSAL BLEEDING TIME (MBT) TEST

Description: The mucosal bleeding time is part of the minimal screening in all patients presented for problem bleeding. The bleeding time test is considered one of the best in-clinic screening methods for assessing platelet function. It is defined as the time period measured between an initial small skin incision and the moment the subsequent bleeding stops. Prolongation of the bleeding time occurs in patients with severe thrombocytopenia, von Willebrand's disease; congenital platelet function defects; acquired platelet function defects occurring with uremia, aspirin therapy (or other nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs), and immune mediated vasculitis syndromes. A normal result for this test is less than 5 minutes for dogs and cats. Abnormalities of the coagulation factor cascade, such as hemophilia or vitamin K antagonism, show mucosal bleeding times within normal limits.

To perform the mucosal bleeding time test,

1. Restrain the patient in lateral recumbancy. It is generally not necessary to use chemical restraint, but the commonly used agents do not alter bleeding times significantly.
2. For dogs, roll back the upper lip, secure lightly with a gauze wrap to slightly engorge the mucosal vessels, and blot the area adjacent to the mucocutaneous junction to remove saliva or debris. Do not use alcohol or other vasodilating astringents.
3. For cats, who may not readily accept this approach, it is convenient to clip an area on the upper medial thigh or caudal lateral abdomen.
4. Use a Surgicutt® bleeding time device to make the cut to initiate capillary bleeding. The spring-loaded Surgicutt® bleeding time devices insure a calibrated stick which will not elicit unwanted large vessel bleeding.
5. Begin timing from the instant of penetration and use absorbent paper such as a disk type coffee filter to draw excess blood every 5-10 seconds. Do not touch the wound, as this could disturb formation of the platelet plug.
6. Stop timing when free blood is no longer absorbed by the paper.

The patient should be checked again after 5-10 minutes of activity to make sure that rebleeding has not occurred. This could indicate a problem with platelet plug stability or clot retraction, both of which can be evidence of a platelet function defect.

Surgicutt® products are sterile, disposable devices used to make uniform incisions for the mucosal bleeding time test. A spring-loaded blade is contained in a convenient, easy-to-use plastic housing. The device is available in the form of the Surgicutt bleeding time device with a 1 mm depth blade and **Surgicutt Pediatric** with a 0.5 mm depth cutting blade for small dogs and cats.

For more information contact

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