ANIMAL BLOOD BANK® Lessons in Lifesaving
"Blood Banking for Every Hospital" Series 1-800-2 HELP K9
Title: **IMPROVE THE SHELF LIFE OF YOUR BLOOD SUPPLY** 1-800-243-5759

You have made a valuable investment in your blood supply. Keep it safe and viable by observing the following guidelines:

Canine Whole Blood and Red Blood Cells have a shelf life of 21 days up to 42 days from the date of collection from the donor dog depending on the type of anticoagulant used.
Feline Whole Blood and Red Blood Cells have a shelf life of up to 30 days from the date of collection from the donor cat using CPDA-1 anticoagulant.

Whole blood and red cells should be stored in a refrigerator which can be maintained at temperatures between 33.8° to 42.8° F (1° to 6° C). **Do not freeze!** Blood in bags should be stored in a vertical position, with airspace between each bag. Red Cell storage survival is enhanced by the plastic bag's ability to "breath". Upright storage of blood bags with the appropriate spacing can be achieved by the use of blood storage racks or the use of plastic blood bag holders. Whole Blood and Red Cell storage should be in a designated area of the refrigerator to avoid chemical and biological contaminants. We recommend that blood products be stored in a separate refrigerator.

Monitor the temperature of the refrigerator using a simple indoor/outdoor thermometer available from many hardware and home supply stores. Mount the gauge on the outside of the refrigerator (not the door). Place approximately 120 to 150 mLs of water into a plastic cup and place the sensor inside the cup, sealing the lid. Put the cup on the center shelf and monitor the refrigerator temperatures, adjusting the controls until you reach the desired temperature range. We recommend that temperatures be monitored at least twice daily to insure proper function. Note that temperatures will increase with the frequency that the door is opened.
Temperature fluctuations caused by opening and closing the door will significantly reduce the shelf life of the blood.

Canine and Feline Plasmas

Fresh Frozen Plasma has a shelf life of one year from the date of collection of the whole blood. Frozen Plasma has a shelf life of up to five years from the original collection date. Plasma bags should be stored in a freezer that maintains its temperature at 0° F. or colder. Frozen and Fresh Frozen Plasmas should be stored in their cartons in a vertical position to detect thawing. The bags were originally frozen in a horizontal position, making the detection of thawing and refreezing possible. Great care should be taken in storing other items in the same freezer, since plasma bags are fragile when frozen and can crack or break if not handled carefully. A designate freezer or area in a freezer is recommended.

You can monitor the temperature of the freezer in the same manner as the refrigerator by placing the sensor into a plastic cup of water and putting it on a shelf of the freezer. Caution: the defrost cycle of some freezers allow the temperature of the freezer to rise above zero! **Temperature fluctuations will significantly reduce the shelf life of the plasma.** This problem can be partially compensated for by "sandwiching" the plasma cartons between bags of deep frozen artificial ice (like those we ship RBCs in).

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