

My Pet Can't Breathe Properly

Family Matters

There are many problems that can safely wait until tomorrow.

Difficulty breathing is **not one of them**.

If your pet is struggling to breathe, they need veterinary attention **immediately**.

At Amity, we believe recognising the signs of breathing difficulty can save lives. Our purpose is to **Empower You Through Education**, helping you know when to act and what to do while getting your pet to the vet.

How Do I Know If My Pet Is Struggling to Breathe?

Some signs are obvious.

Others are much more subtle.

Look out for:

- Rapid breathing.
- Laboured breathing.
- Open-mouth breathing (particularly in cats).
- Stretching the neck forwards to breathe.
- Blue, grey or very pale gums.
- Loud breathing or wheezing.
- Reluctance to lie down.
- Collapse.

One of the earliest signs is simply that **your pet seems to be making more effort to breathe**.

If you're asking yourself whether they're breathing normally, it's worth getting them checked.

Why Might My Pet Have Breathing Difficulties?

There are many possible causes, including:

- Heart disease.
- Pneumonia.
- Asthma (especially in cats).
- Allergic reactions.
- Heatstroke.
- Airway obstruction.
- Fluid around the lungs.

- Trauma.
- Certain poisons.

The symptoms may look similar, but the treatments are completely different.

That's why diagnosing the underlying cause is so important.

What Should I Do?

The most important thing is to **keep your pet as calm and quiet as possible**.

Stress and excitement increase oxygen demand, making breathing even more difficult.

Contact your veterinary practice immediately and let them know you're on your way.

If possible:

- Carry your pet rather than making them walk.
- Keep them cool and well ventilated.
- Travel directly to the practice.

Avoid unnecessary handling or restraint.

What Shouldn't I Do?

Don't force food or water.

Don't spend time searching online for a diagnosis.

Don't wait to see if they improve.

And if your cat is **open-mouth breathing**, treat this as an emergency. Unlike dogs, cats rarely breathe through an open mouth unless they are under significant respiratory distress.

What Will the Vet Do?

Our first priority is **helping your pet breathe more comfortably**.

Before performing tests, we often provide oxygen and minimise stress.

Once your pet is stable, we may recommend:

- A physical examination.
- Chest X-rays.
- Ultrasound.
- Blood tests.
- Blood pressure measurement.

- Hospitalisation.

Sometimes the safest approach is to stabilise first and diagnose second.

Time Matters

Many breathing problems are highly treatable.

The sooner we know what's causing the difficulty, the sooner we can begin the right treatment.

Waiting, however, can allow a manageable condition to become life-threatening.

Trust Your Instincts

You know your pet better than anyone.

If they are breathing differently, making more effort than usual or simply don't look comfortable, trust your instincts.

We would always rather examine a pet that turns out to be fine than have someone delay because they hoped things would improve.

Breathing is something we all take for granted.

Until it becomes difficult.

Because every breath matters.

Because they're not just your pet.

They're family.

Family Matters.

If you need more information, book an appointment with an Amity vet. We're here to Empower You Through Education and help you become your pet's greatest advocate.