Glossary of Terms
ABC Veterinary Assistant Program
### Glossary of Terms

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Glossary of Terms

A

- **AAHA** (American Animal Hospital Association) – An association of veterinarians that represent a high quality of set standards
- **Abandoned Animal** – part of the Model Veterinary Practice Act created by the AVMA, this section encourages responsible animal ownership and provides a standardized procedure for veterinarians to address animals that may have been abandoned by a client
- **Acoustical impedance** – when a sound wave encounters a material with a different density
- **Acute** – sharp or severe, rapid onset
- **Adjunct** – the non-active ingredient added to a drug. Some drugs are mixed with water, which is quickly absorbed, while others are combined with oil, which takes longer to absorb
- **Adjuvant** – assisting or aiding. Something added to a drug or vaccine to increase the effects or response
- **Agonal** – term used to explain the moment right before death
- **Agar plate** – a sterile Petri dish that contains a growth medium (typically agar plus nutrients) used to culture microorganisms
- **ALARA** – As Low As Reasonably Achievable [from the National Committee on Radiation Protection and Measurements (NCRP)]; a safety technique for using as little radiation as possible
- **Albumin** – the most prevalent blood protein; responsible for actually keeping water in one’s bloodstream
- **Alcohol (ethanol or isopropanol)** – a fast-acting disinfectant that can be wiped on the skin and allowed to evaporate. Alcohols are more effective when combined with purified water. It has a wide microbicidal activity and is non-corrosive; however, it is not effective against fungal or bacterial spores and has limited activity in the presence of organic material. It is also flammable and has limited residual activity due to evaporation
• **Aldehydes** – disinfectants that have a wide microbicidal activity and are sporicidal and fungicidal. They are partly inactivated by organic matter and have slight residual activity

• **Agonal respirations** – respirations occurring immediately before, just at the moment of, or for up to several minutes after death; agonal breaths are a neurologic reflex

• **Ambu bag** – a hand-held device used to provide ventilation to a patient who is not breathing or who is breathing inadequately

• **American Animal Hospital Association (AAHA)** – a national association of veterinarians that represent a high quality of set standards

• **American Kennel Club (AKC)** – a nonprofit organization devoted to the advancement of purebred dogs

• **American Society of Anesthesiologists (ASA)** – the medical group that represents the interests of American anesthesiologists

• **American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA)** – a not-for-profit association representing more than 75,000 veterinarians working in private and corporate practice, government, industry, academia, and uniformed services

• **Anal glands** or **anal sacs** – located under the skin bilaterally of the anus in the perineal area, these sacs hold an odorous scent material that is secreted via ducts at the external rectum when the animal defecates. The purpose of this is to leave their scent on the feces for other animals to recognize

• **Analeptic** – drugs that are central nervous system stimulants

• **Anatomic directional vocabulary** – terminology used to indicate the anatomical position of a patient when restrained

• **Ancylostoma caninum** – hookworms; larvae can cause cutaneous larval migrans in humans and are transferred from dog feces to the soil where the larvae live and can penetrate the human skin causing infections

• **Anesthesia** – occurs when the brain concentration of anesthetic causes loss of consciousness. It is a controlled, reversible intoxication of the nervous system. There are three phases of general anesthesia – the first is the induction period, the second is the maintenance period, and the third is the recovery period

• **Anesthetic machine** – a machine that supplies the patient with anesthetic gases and oxygen while removing the carbon dioxide waste that is exhaled
• **Anesthetics** – drugs that cause loss of sensation with or without the loss of consciousness

• **Anesthetic record** – kept to maintain a legal record of anesthetic events and to enhance the recognition in trends in monitored parameters. These forms are divided into three sections: pre-surgical period, surgical period, and post-surgical or post-anesthetic period

• **Angled centrifuge head** – a centrifuge head that calls for the specimen tubes to be inserted internally at an angle of approximately 52°

• **Anode** – a positively charged electrode, as of an electrolytic cell, storage battery, or electron tube

• **Anogenital** – the region under an animal’s tail, which is the area including the anus and genitalia

• **Anorexia** – refusal to eat or drink

• **Anthelminthics** – *(see also antiprotozoals)* destroy or cause the expulsion of parasitic intestinal worms; dewormer

• **Antibiotic** – a substance, such as penicillin or streptomycin, produced by or derived from certain fungi, bacteria, and other organisms, that can destroy or inhibit the growth of other microorganisms

• **Antibiotic sensitivity** – the term used to describe the susceptibility of pathogens to antibiotics

• **Antibody** – small disease-fighting proteins produced by certain types of cells called b-cells. The proteins are made in response to foreign particles such as bacteria or viruses. These antibodies bind with certain proteins (antigens) on foreign particles like bacteria to help inactivate them.

• **Antifungals** – destroy or prevent the growth of fungi

• **Antihistamine** – drugs that are used to counteract the physiological effects of histamine production in allergic reactions and colds

• **Antimicrobial** – capable of destroying or inhibiting the growth of microorganisms

• **Antiprotozoals** – *(see also anthelminthics)* destroy or cause the expulsion of parasitic intestinal worms; used to fight diseases (like malaria) that are caused by protozoan parasites

• **Antiseptic** – a substance that inhibits the growth and reproduction of disease-causing microorganisms
• **Anus** – the terminal opening of the digestive system
• **Apnea** – the absence of breathing
• **Appointment card** – similar to a business card with the hospital’s name, address and phone number on one side; the other side is designated for recording appointment information
• **Aqueous solution** – a solution where the solvent is water
• **Ascites** – an abnormal accumulation of serous fluid in the abdominal cavity
• **Asepsis** - keeping a constant sterile condition in tissues, on materials and in rooms obtained by excluding, removing or killing microorganisms
• **Aseptic technique** – a set of specific practices and procedures performed under carefully controlled conditions with the goal of minimizing contamination by pathogens
• **Aspiration** – the application of suction to remove fluid or gases from a cavity or inhaling foreign material into the lungs
• **Aspiration pneumonia** – inflammation of the lungs from inhaling foreign material
• **Assay** – to examine or analyze
• **Atelectasis** – a collapsed or airless state of the lung
• **Aural** – of or pertaining to the ear
• **Aural medications** – those that are administered into the ear canal
• **Auscultate** – to listen to
• **Auscultation** – examining a patient by listening to the heart and lungs or the abdomen with a stethoscope
• **Autolysis** – a destruction of cells by the cell’s own enzymes
• **Autonomics** – relating to the autonomic nervous system
• **Auxilla** – referring to the armpit
• **Bacterial Enteritis** – inflammation of the intestine
• **Bactericide** – a substance capable of killing bacteria
• **Bacteriostat** – an agent, such as a chemical or biological material, that inhibits bacterial growth
• **BAR** – bright, alert, and responsive
• **Bard-Parker** – scalpel handles
• **bid** – abbreviation for “twice daily in 24 hours”
• **Bifurcation** – division of two
• **Bile** – a yellowish-green liquid secreted by the liver
• **Bilirubin** – a red bile pigment derived from the degradation of hemoglobin during the normal and abnormal destruction of red blood cells
• **Binocular microscope** – a compound light microscope adapted to the use of both eyes
• **Biologic substances** – substances that are made up of components of organisms that can no longer cause disease and are either killed or modified in such a way that they still produce immunity, but are still alive (vaccines)
• **Biopsy punch** – an instrument for cutting and removing a disk of tissue
• **Blood feathers** – new, growing feathers that have vascular shafts and present in a blue-grey color until they become mature when they become hollow again
• **Blood pressure monitor** – an instrument used to watch the patient’s blood pressure
• **Bolus** – the administration of a drug, medication or other substance in the form of a single, large dose
• **Bots** – fly larvae of some species that appear as white, worm-like structures and are also referred to as grubs or warbles
• **Bow knot** – similar to the reefer’s knot in that it is based on the square knot and binds two ropes together, this rope includes two bights tied together to form loops
• **Brachycephalic** – dogs having a short muzzle accompanied by a wide head
• **Breach of contract** – a legal concept in which a binding agreement or bargained-for exchange is not honored by one or more of the parties to the contract by non-
performance or interference with the other party’s performance; also known as violation of contractual obligation

- **Bronchi** – any of the larger passages conveying air to and within the lungs
- **Bronchoscopy** – endoscopy of the lower respiratory tract
- **Brucellosis** – this is most likely to occur in breeding kennels. In humans, symptoms include high fever, shivering, and weakness. Dogs should be routinely tested for brucellosis.
- **Buccal** – pertaining to the cheek (inside the oral cavity)
- **Buffy coat** – the layer of material above the packed erythrocytes (red blood cells) after centrifugation; consists primarily of leukocytes (white blood cells)
- **Bulla** – an air-filled cavity in the middle ear
C

- **Cage card** – a form of non-verbal communication that allows the veterinarian or technician to check in with the patient without having to locate a staff member; it is usually an index card affixed to the outside of a patient’s cage or kennel that includes basic information about the patient as well as fields for recording observations during his/her therapy.

- **Calculus** – an abnormal concretion, usually composed of mineral salts, occurring within the animal body, chiefly in the hollow organs or passages (such as the mouth)

- **Calico** – term used to describe the color and pattern of a cat; consists of patches of black or grey (maybe striped, or tabby patterned), orange or buff and white.

- **Caliper** – a simplistic instrument that is used to measure the thickness of a patient’s anatomical part in order to determine the exposure and thus produce a precise radiograph

- **Campylobacteriosis** – bacteria causes cramps and diarrhea in both dogs and humans. These diseases are commonly contracted by dogs, cats and humans from the same source, such as infected milk or raw meat. They are passed through food and dog and cat feces to humans. Risk factors include young age and crowded conditions such as kennels and animal shelters

- **Canine teeth** – ideal for piercing food and killing prey as they have pointed crowns

- **Capillary action** – the movement of fluids through a very narrow tube

- **Capillary refill time (CRT)** – estimates tissue perfusion and oxygenation. By pressing on the gums and then quickly releasing, the tissue should first blanch out to white, then when you release your finger, count the seconds that it takes the pink color to return. Normal CRT is between 1 and 2 seconds. If the delay is longer, there is a problem.

- **Carcinogen** – a cancer-causing substance or agent

- **Cardiac drugs** – relating to the cardiovascular system

- **CARP method** – a method of handling difficult clients created by Robert Macal, M.A., of the Institute for Cooperative Communication; this method includes four steps – control, acknowledge, refocus, and problem-solve.

- **Carpal joint or carpus** – the “wrist” joint of a dog or cat’s front leg

- **Cassette front** – the face of the film cassette
• **Cassettes** – also known as film holders, cassettes are light-tight containers which are designed to hold x-ray films and intensifying screens in close contact. They are meant to hold film flat and prevent entry of daylight (and thus exposure) to the unexposed film.

• **Castration** – to remove both testes from the male of the species; also known as orchidectomy or neutering

• **Caterwauling** – a loud, shrieking noise is made by cats when they are fighting or in acute pain; also called screeching

• **Cathode** – a negatively-charged electrode, as of an electrolytic cell, a storage battery, or an electron tube

• **Caudal** – toward the patient’s tail

• **Centrifugation** – samples are spun in the centrifuge; components of the sample (which may be urine, blood, etc.) of higher density migrate away from the axis of the centrifuge, while less-dense components of the sample migrate towards the axis

• **Centrifuge** – an apparatus consisting essentially of a compartment spun about a central axis to separate contained materials of different densities, or to separate colloidal particles suspended in a liquid

• **Cephalic vein** – the vein running on the anterior (top) surface of the forelimb of most domestic animals

• **Cesarean section** – the surgical delivery of offspring through an incision in the maternal abdominal and uterine wall; also called a c-section or cesarean birth

• **Chattel** - An article of movable personal property

• **Chemical restraint** – a method of animal restraint that utilizes drugs such as sedatives, tranquilizers and anesthesia to alter the patient’s mental state, allowing the animal to stay immobilized and/or without pain, and causing him/her to be cooperative during procedures.

• **Chemistry panels** – single tests and group tests facilitated by analyzers of blood serum; these tests evaluate how well an internal organ is working. These panels commonly display electrolyte determinations as well.

• **Cheyletiella mites** – mites that are white and large enough to be visible to the naked eye. They are also unusual because they are surface-dwelling, meaning they reside in the keratin layer of the skin and in the hair of the host. They spend their entire lives on the surface of their host’s skin.
- **Chief complaint (CC)** – the reason why the patient has been brought to the veterinary facility

- **Chiggers** – commonly referred to as *Trombicula* mites or harvest mites, these parasites are usually visible as yellow, orange or red specks on the faces of dogs and cats. They have six legs in their adult stage. These mites are unusual as they are only parasitic during their larval stage, and they also do not burrow into the skin or feed on blood.

- **Chlamydial diseases** – this rarely causes disease in dogs, however it can be transmitted to humans and can cause several different diseases. These infections usually respond to antibiotics. Cats can also get Chlamydia but it is not contagious to humans.

- **Chlorhexidine** – a topical antiseptic that comes as a concentrated solution or as a soap- commonly used in skin preparation for surgical procedures

- **Chloroxylenol** – commonly sold in the form of Techni-Care microbicide and Dettol, chloroxylenol is a chemical compound commonly used in antibacterial soaps. It is also used as an antiseptic surgical scrub and a pre and post-operative solution.

- **Chronic** – long lasting or persistent

- **Cleaning** – to rid of dirt, stains, and impurities; using soap and water to mechanically reduce the number of organisms on a surface; the removal of organic matter

- **Client** – the patient’s owner, owner’s agent, or other person responsible for the patient

- **Client communication cards** – greeting cards that are often used to contact clients for a myriad of reasons; they serve to welcome the client after their first visit, to remind the client when it’s time for an annual visit, to console the client when his/her animal dies, to thank them for recommending the hospital to friends and family, etc.

- **Client record** – the compilation of client and patient information; a legal document

- **Clinical or standard centrifuge** – a type of centrifuge that can hold various sizes of test tubes

- **CO2 canister** – part of the anesthesia machine, this canister holds baralyme or sodalyme, both of which absorb CO2. The granules are white, and when they have absorbed their limit of CO2, they will turn blue.

- **Cold sterilization** – immersing instruments in the sterilant solution contained in the cold tray
• **Cold tray** – a non-porous container holding sterilant solution
• **Collimate** – to bring into line or to make parallel
• **Collimator** – a device capable of collimating radiation. A coning device that narrows the primary x-ray beam and defines its directions and dimensions
• **Colonoscopy** – endoscopy of the colon
• **Colostrum** – the thin yellowish fluid secreted by the mammary glands at the time of parturition that is rich in antibodies and minerals, and precedes the production of true milk
• **Common law** – the system of laws originated and developed in England and based on court decisions, on the doctrines implicit in those decisions, and on customs and usages rather than on codified written laws
• **Confirmation call** – a phone call made to a client approximately 24 hours before his/her scheduled appointment to remind him/her of the appointment and confirm his/her intent to attend
• **Conjunctiva** – a thin, delicate membrane lining the inside of the upper and lower lids and some outer portions of the eye ball.
• **Contract law** – the branch of civil law dealing with interpretation and enforcement of written agreements between parties
• **Contrast media** – substances used in radiology to highlight a structure. Barium is an example of positive contrast media, which shows white on the x-ray; air or other gases is an example of negative contrast media, which shows black on the x-ray
• **Controlled substance** – defined by law as substances with potential for physical addiction, psychological addiction, and/or abuse; includes psychoactive drugs, including narcotics, hallucinogens, depressants, and stimulants
• **Controlled Substances Act** – the law that regulates the prescribing and dispensing of dangerous substances, especially psychoactive drugs, including narcotics, hallucinogens, depressants, and stimulants
• **Controlled substances log** – legal documents logging controlled substances used and prescribed by the facility; monitored by the DEA
• **Counting method of hand washing** – involves counting 10 scrubs on each surface of the hands, rinsing, and repeating
• **Coplin jars** – square jars (often made of glass) with lids that have grooves on the inside to hold slides vertically
- **Core vaccines** – vaccines that should be given to all animals within a certain species
- **Cornea** – this is a clear structure covering the remaining quarter on the front surface of the eye. It is comprised of very thin layers of cells arranged in such a way that the cornea is transparent, allowing light to enter the eye. Its transparency is maintained by a careful control of the moisture it contains; thus, a cloudy eye could indicate too much or too little moisture. The cornea is the most sensitive part of the body.
- **Costochondral junction** – where the rib cage meets the sternum
- **Coverts** – little feathers on both sides of primary and secondary feathers
- **Cranial** – toward the patient’s head
- **Crash cart** – a medical emergency kit
- **Crop** – a saccular diverticulum of the esophagus just anterior to the entrance to the thorax; a pouch in the esophagus of many birds, in which food is held for later digestion or for regurgitation to nestlings
- **Cruelty to Animals Immunity for Reporting** – part of the Model Veterinary Practice Act created by the AVMA, this section was inserted to encourage veterinarians to report animal abuse to appropriate authorities by providing immunity to the reporting veterinarian
- **Culture** – the cultivation of microorganisms, as bacteria, or of tissues, for scientific study, medicinal use, etc.
- **Culturette tubes** – those with the sterile cotton swab attached to the lid of the sterile plastic tube
- **Cutaneous exposure** – contact with the skin of an infected animal
- **Cuterebrosis** – results from a Wolf Warble larva burrowing into the subcutaneous tissues of the host, and it is characterized by a swollen, cyst-like lesion with a central pore
- **Cyanosis** – an abnormal condition of blue discoloration of the gums, mucous membranes of the mouth, or the tongue that implies insufficient oxygen levels. Normal mucous membranes should be pink, indicating adequate oxygen saturation levels.
- **Cyanotic** – the result of a lack of oxygen in the blood in which mucous membranes turn blue and then white
• **Cystocentesis** – puncture of the bladder for the purpose of obtaining an uncontaminated urine sample.

• **Cystoscopy** – endoscopy of the urinary tract

• **Cytology** – the study of the microscopic appearance of cells, esp. for the diagnosis of abnormalities and malignancies
Decant – to pour the liquid portion of the urine from one container to another gently without disturbing the sediment

Deciduous teeth – non-permanent, “baby” teeth

Decubitus ulcer – a pressure sore (bed sore) or an open wound that develops in the skin and tissues over a bony prominence; these bed sores can occur as a result of pressure build-up from prolonged lying down on an anatomical pressure points like the hip or shoulder tissue.

Dedicated-use analyzers – blood chemistry analyzers such as the blood glucose detector that is commonly used in diabetic humans

Deep (internal) – toward the center (whole body or part)

Defensive threat posture – canine body language that indicates that the dog is being self-protective; a dog in this posture will have his/her tail tucked, hackles up, ears back, pupils dilated, nose wrinkled, corners of mouth back, body lowered, and teeth showing.

Demodex mange mites – most commonly found in the hair follicles of dogs, these mites can also infest humans and felines as well as cattle, sheep, goats, pigs, and horses. However, they are host-specific and do not transfer from one host species to another. They can cause a disease called demodicosis when in large numbers and can also produce a condition known as “red mange.”

Dental prophylaxis – the cleaning of the teeth by qualified individual

Dentition – the natural teeth in the dental arch

Dermatophyte – fungal infection upon the skin

Diagnose (Dx) – to distinguish or identify (a disease, for example) by diagnosis

Digital radiography – a technique in which x-ray absorption is quantified by assignment of a number to the amount of x-rays reaching the detector; the information is manipulated by a computer to produce an optimal image

Diluent – an agent used to dilute another substance

Dipping – applying a pesticide (such as flea, mite, or mange treatment) or medicating the skin and coat
• **Direct exposure cassettes** – cassettes that hold films without screens, made out of cardboard or plastic and are usually only used when intense detail is necessary for radiographic examination

• **Direct supervision** – a licensed veterinarian is readily available on the premises where the patient is being treated and is readily available.

• **Disinfection** – cleansing so as to destroy or prevent the growth of disease-carrying (pathogenic) microorganisms; the process of applying antimicrobial agents to non-living objects to destroy microorganisms

• **Distal** – away from the patient’s body (referring to extremities); also, farthest from the midline

• **Donning** – the processes of gowning and gloving the surgeon

• **Dorsal** – of, pertaining to, or situated at the back

• **Dorsal (directional)** – toward the patient’s back

• **Dorsal recumbency** – the patient is lying on his/her back; this position is most commonly used in surgery as it exposes the belly and scrotal area.

• **Dorsolateral** – pertaining to the dorsum or back of an animal and his/her side

• **Dosimeter** – also called “badge”, it is a small instrument to be worn on ones body while taking x-rays, it monitors occupational radiation exposure

• **Double-booking** – scheduling two patients for the same time slot

• **Dram** – a unit of apothecary weight equal to \( \frac{1}{8} \) of an ounce or 60 grains (3.89 grams)

• **Dual mop method** – using two separate mopping buckets, one containing clean water and the other containing disinfectant. The mop is saturated in disinfectant and rung dry; after mopping a section of the floor, it is rinsed in the water bucket. It is then dipped in disinfectant and rung out again, and the process is repeated. The mop is then washed out, disinfected and rung dry upon finishing the area.

• **Dystocia** – difficult birth
Echinococcosis – a hydatid (cyst) disease; humans are infected with this disease upon eating raw meat from an animal infected with the echinococcus tapeworm.

Ectoparasites – also known as external parasites; parasites residing on the surface of their host

Edema – effusion of serous fluid into the spaces between cells in tissue spaces or into body cavities

Elective appointments – non-emergent appointments

Elective surgery – a surgery that is scheduled by choice and/or ahead of time (i.e., spaying/neutering)

Electrocardiogram (ECG, EKG) – measures electrical impulses that monitor contraction of the heart’s muscles

Electrode – a solid electric conductor through which an electric current enters or leaves an electrolytic cell or other medium

Electrolytes – any of various ions, such as sodium, potassium, or chloride, required by cells to regulate the electric charge and flow of water molecules across the cell membrane

Elizabethan collar – also called a space collar or a cone; a circle made of either plastic or foam-covered cardboard with a hole cut in the center for the animal’s head to fit through

Emetic – substance used to induce vomiting

Endogenous – originating from within an organism, tissue, or cell

Endoscopy – a medical procedure in which an instrument called an endoscope is used for examining visually the interior of a bodily canal or a hollow organ such as the colon, bladder, or stomach

Endotracheal Intubation – the passage of a tube through the oral cavity, pharynx, and larynx into the windpipe which leads to the lungs

Endotracheal (ET) tube – a tube that passes through the oral cavity, pharynx, and larynx into the windpipe which leads to the lungs
- **Environmental history** includes information regarding the pet’s home life and daily care, such as his/her feeding schedule, type of food, if he/she is an indoor or outdoor pet, grooming schedule, etc.
- **Eosin** – any of a class of red acid dyes of the xanthene group used as cytoplasmic stains and as counterstains, especially the sodium and potassium salts of certain of these dyes.
- **Epidural** – analgesics and anesthetics are injected into the epidural of the spine.
- **Epiglottis** – triangular shaped piece of cartilage that protects the larynx by closing when swallowing, preventing foreign objects from entering the lungs.
- **Epithelium** – the thin, membranous tissue that lines most of the internal and external surfaces of an animal’s body.
- **Eruption** – the process of a tooth growing in.
- **Erythrocytes** – red blood cells (RBC).
- **Esophageal stethoscope** – a stethoscope which is inserted into the esophagus, down to heart level; the heart sounds can thus be heard from within the chest.
- **Estrus** – the period of time during which a female dog or cat is fertile and can become pregnant; estrus occurs every six months for three weeks. Also known as heat.
- **Ethylene oxide (EtO)** – an industrial chemical compound that kills bacteria, mold and fungi without the use of heat.
- **Etiology** – the cause or origin of a disease or disorder as determined by medical diagnosis.
- **Eustachian tube** – a thin tube in the middle ear used for equilibrium that leads from the bulla to the back of the mouth.
- **Euthanasia** – the act or practice of ending the life of an animal in a fashion that minimizes pain, stress and suffering.
- **Exogenous** – coming from outside a system.
- **Exposure factors** – x-ray machine settings including mA, mAs, kVp, time, etc.
- **Exposure time in milliamperes-seconds (mAs)** – determined by multiplying the mA by the amount of time in seconds, the mAs indicates the exposure time in fractions of a second.
- **Extralabel** – actual use or intended use of a drug in an animal in a manner that is not in accordance with the approved labeling.
• **Extubation** – the process of deflating the cuff and removing the endotracheal tube

• **Exudate** – a fluid that has exuded out of a tissue or its capillaries due to injury or inflammation
F

- **Fecal flotation** – a technique of parasitic identification that is based on the principle that the parasites’ eggs are less dense and lighter in weight than the solution in which they are mixed, which causes them to rise to the top of the solution. By placing a slide over the container in which the solution and sample are mixed, the ova will attach to the slide. The veterinary staff can then examine them under a microscope.

- **Fecal loop** – a plastic loop with slotted ends used for quick and easy fecal samples; there are commonly two loop sizes, one on each end, for large and small animals. The loop is lubricated and slipped into the rectum for specimen collection.

- **Federal law** – the body of law created by the federal government of a nation. A federal government is formed when a group of political units (such as states) join together in a federation (such as the USA), surrendering their individual sovereignty and many powers to the central government while retaining or reserving other limited powers as individual states.

- **Femoral artery** – the chief artery of the thigh.

- **Femoral vein** – the chief vein of the inner thigh.

- **Fenestration** – an opening, as in the opening of the surgical drape which is where the incision is made.

- **Feral** – wild, particularly describing animals that have been domesticated, such as cats.

- **Fiberoptics** – the transmission of light signals via glass fibers.

- **Fiberscope** - a flexible fiberoptic bundle with an eyepiece at one end and a lens at the other.

- **Fibrin** – one of the factors essential in clot formation and is removed during the clotting process.

- **Fibrinogen** – the precursor of fibrin.

- **Filament** – a high-resistance wire or ribbon forming the cathode in the x-ray machine.

- **Film Focus Distance (FFD)** – also referred to as focus film distance, focal-film distance and sometimes source-image distance (SID); the FFD is the distance between the x-ray beam source and the film. It is usually set at 36 to 40 inches (90 to 100 cm) in veterinary medicine. The FFD should be standardized to provide satisfactory beam intensity without image distortion.
• **Film holders** – also known as cassettes, film holders are light-tight containers which are designed to hold x-ray films and intensifying screens in close contact. They are meant to hold film flat and prevent entry of daylight (and thus exposure) to the unexposed film

• **First in, first out (FIFO)** – existing inventory is pulled to the front of the shelves and new inventory is placed behind it; this way, newer items with later expiration dates will be used after older items with impending expiration dates

• **Flea** – a small, wingless, blood-sucking insect

• **Flea- and Tick-Borne Diseases** – several diseases can be transmitted to humans via fleas and ticks, such as Lyme disease.

• **Flocculent** – containing numerous shreds or fluffy particles of grayish or white mucus or other material; used of a fluid such as urine

• **Flow meter** – part of the anesthesia machine that is meant to deliver a consistent flow of oxygen to the vaporizer, then into the gas outlet, to the breathing circuit (or tubes) and finally to the patient

• **Flow rate of the IV catheter** – the relation between the volume of fluids to be administered and the pace at which they are administered

• **Fly strike** – also known simply as strike, fly strike is a condition in which fly maggots hatch from eggs and move throughout a wound or feces ingesting any exudates, secretions, and dead cells but not the living tissue

• **Focal spot** – the point where the electron beam interacts with the anode (in the x-ray machine)

• **Formalin** – liquid formaldehyde, fluid in biopsy jars that preserves the tissues placed within

• **Fungicide** – a chemical substance that destroys or inhibits the growth of fungi

• **Fur mites** – arthropod of the order Acarina; characterized by minute size, usually transparent or semi-transparent body, free-living or parasitic on animals or plants

• **FVRCP** – feline “distemper” vaccine that vaccinates against Feline viral rhinotracheitis, calici and panleukopenia
G

- **Gastric tube** – a tube that descends through the esophagus and into the stomach
- **Gastrointestinal** – pertaining to the stomach and intestines
- **Gavage** – introduction of nutritive material into the stomach by means of a tube
- **Germicide** – an agent that kills germs, especially pathogenic microorganisms
- **Giardiasis** – a flagellate protozoan parasite transmitted through water; if a dog drinks contaminated water, such as from rivers or ponds, they may become infected. Diarrhea is the most common symptom
- **Glutaraldehyde** – a colorless liquid with a pungent odor used in disinfection processes
- **Gram's stain** – a 4 step staining technique that identifies bacteria as either Gram negative (in which the bacteria pick up a pink stain) or Gram positive (in which the bacteria show blue)
- **Grid** – a flat plate, approximately 2 to 4mm in thickness, made in various (radiographic) film sizes and constructed of fine strips of lead which alternate with strips of either plastic or aluminum. It is usually recommended that a grid is used for any anatomical part in excess of 10cm in thickness. Grids are placed on top of the cassette, though many x-ray tables have special slots for grids as it is better to keep them still and protect them from damage
- **Gross Negligence** – intentional disregard for the safety and well being of others
- **Half hitch knot** – tied around a patient’s limb to extend it, or used to secure one end of a rope to a cleat under the examination table
- **Halogens (Hypochlorites and Iodine Compounds)** – any of a group of five chemically-related nonmetallic elements including fluorine, chlorine, bromine, iodine, and astatine. Hypochlorites include chemicals such as bleach, which is a true disinfectant, and chlorine.
- **Halter tie knot** – a quick-release knot used in securing conscious animals to immovable objects; tightens when pulled on by the patient but releases when pulled at the other end by the handler
- **Hamstring groups of muscles** – the group of muscles located caudally on the proximal portion of the hind leg
- **Harvest mites** – commonly referred to as *Trombicula* mites or chiggers, these parasites are usually visible as yellow, orange or red specks on the faces of dogs and cats. They have six legs in their adult stage. These mites are unusual as they are only parasitic during their larval stage, and they also do not burrow into the skin or feed on blood
- **Hazard Communication Coordinator (HCC)** – the designated coordinator within the veterinary facility who oversees a pre-decided plan that complies with all laws since OSHA conducts random and unexpected inspections of every workplace
- **Hazardous waste** – any industrial by-product that is destructive to the environment or dangerous to the health of people or animals; divided into biohazards and non-hazardous material
- **Heart rate (HR)** – a patient’s pulse determined through auscultation
- **Heat** – the period of time during which a female dog or cat is fertile and can become pregnant; heat occurs every six months for three weeks. Also known as estrus
- **Hemoglobin (Hgb)** – the oxygen carrying molecule in the center of the red blood cell
- **Hematology** – the science of the blood and blood-producing organs
- **Hematoma** – the collection of blood generally the result of leaking blood around a vein; a localized collection of blood which may or may not be clotted
- **Hematuria** – the presence of blood in the urine
• **Hemolysis** – the destruction or dissolution of red blood cells, with subsequent release of hemoglobin

• **Hepatic** – pertaining to the liver

• **Hepatic Lipidosis** – also known as fatty liver syndrome, hepatic lipidosis is a common syndrome characterized by excess fat accumulation in the liver of cats. It can occur in cats of any age or breed and may affect more females than males

• **High dry lens** – the 40x setting on the microscope that is used for viewing fungus, parasites, and cells

• **Histology** – the anatomical study of the microscopic structure of animal and plant tissues

• **History of chief complaint form (Hx / CC)** – a form filled out by the patient’s owner that provides background information on the current medical problem

• **Hobbles** – restrain an animal’s legs so that he/she may walk using small steps but cannot scratch at his/her face and body

• **Hop up** – a training trick for birds in which they are taught to hop from a perch to an extended finger

• **Hormones** – substances, usually peptides or steroids, produced by one tissue and conveyed by the bloodstream to another to effect physiological activity, such as growth or metabolism; also synthetic compounds that act like a hormone in the body

• **Humerus** – the long bone of the arm or forelimb, extending from the shoulder to the elbow

• **Hypercapnic** – having an increased build-up of CO2 in one’s blood levels

• **Hyperproteinemia** – the patient will have a relatively decreased total protein concentration

• **Hyperthermia** – increased body temperature

• **Hypoproteinemia** – the patient will have a relatively elevated total protein concentration

• **Hypostatic pneumonia** – inflammation and consolidation of the lungs resulting from lack of normal movement by a recumbent patient

• **Hypothermia** – decreased body temperature
- **Iatrogenic** – inadvertent injury or illness caused by the exam or treatment from the veterinarian
- **Iliac crests** - the thickened and expanded bone rim at the upper border of the ilium
- **Ilium** - the bone making up the expansive superior portion of the hip bone
- **Immediate supervision** – a licensed veterinarian is within direct eyesight and/or hearing range.
- **Impedance analyzers** – a type of hematology analyzer; impedance analyzers are electronic cell counters that operate based on the passage of electric current that have been adapted from their human form for use with various animal species as blood cell sizes vary between animal species
- **Incisors** – small front teeth with a sharp cutting surface; used for nibbling, grooming and to grasp and tear food
- **Indirect or general supervision** – a licensed veterinarian is not on the premises but is able to perform the duties of a veterinarian by maintaining communication with and is accessible to support personnel, such as by electronic means.
- **Inflammation** – a localized protective reaction of tissue to irritation, injury, or infection, characterized by the 5 cardinal signs: pain, heat, redness, swelling, and sometimes loss of function
- **Informed consent** – the veterinarian has informed the client in a manner that would be understood by a reasonable person, of the diagnostic and treatment options, risk assessment, and prognosis, and has provided the client with an estimate of the charges for veterinary services to be rendered and the client has consented to the recommended treatment
- **Infusion pump** – infuses fluids, medication or nutrients into a patient's circulatory system via intravenous catheter
- **Inhalation and exhalation valves** – part of the anesthesia machine, these valves move up and down as air is inhaled and exhaled by the patient through the system. This is another way to visualize a draped patient’s rate of breathing
- **In-house laboratory** – tests are performed within the veterinary facility
- **Inner ear** – contains nerves and centers for balance and hearing and connects to the brain.
• **Inoculate** – to introduce a substance, like a vaccine

• **Instrument milk** – a chemical used to lubricate surgical instruments and provide a protecting coating. Instrument milk comes as a white substance and is diluted according to accompanying instructions. It provides a protective shield that prevents corrosion, rusting, and dulling of metal surfaces

• **Intensifying screen** – a sheet of crystals of inorganic salts (called phosphors) which emit fluorescent light when excited by x-ray radiation; the sheets are used to intensify the effect of x-rays during exposure of x-ray film.

• **Interdigital** – between the toes

• **Interscapular** – the space over the back between the scapulas

• **Intraarterial injection (IA)** – the drug is injected directly into an artery

• **Intracardiac injection (IC)** – the drug is injected directly into the heart

• **Intradermal injection (ID)** – the drug is injected into the layers of the skin

• **Intramuscular injection (IM)** – the drug is injected into the muscle

• **Intranasally (IN)** – into the nose

• **Intraosseous (IO)** – situated within, occurring within, or administered by entering a bone

• **Intraperitoneal injection (IP)** – the drug is injected into the abdomen where it is absorbed

• **Intravenous injection (IV)** – the drug is injected directly into the vein or if an IV catheter is placed, it is injected directly into the catheter

• **Intubation** – the placement of an endotracheal tube

• **Iris** – the colored portion at the front of the eye and is positioned in front of the ciliary body. It is the outermost portion of the vascular layer.

• **IV splint** – this device is made specifically for the purpose of extending the foreleg of patients on IV fluids.

**J**

• **Jugular vein** – the chief vein of the neck
K

- **Keratin** – a tough, insoluble protein substance that is the chief structural constituent of hair, nails, horns, and hooves
- **Killed vaccine (KV)** – contains a dead version of the virus with an adjuvant that stimulates immune response
L

- **Lacral duct**—also known as the tear duct, the lacrimal is a duct opening at the inside corner of the eye. This is where tears exit the eye
- **Laparoscopy**—endoscopy of the abdominal cavity (through a small incision)
- **Laryngeal cartilages**—pertaining to the larynx; includes epiglottis, thyroid, cricoid, and the paired arytenoid cartilages
- **Laryngoscope**—an instrument used to visualize the larynx
- **Laser-based analyzers**—a type of hematology analyzer; these systems utilize laser beams that are scattered off of the blood cells and their degree and direction of light facilitates the counting of monocytes, lymphocytes, granulocytes, and erythrocytes
- **Lateral**—of or pertaining to the side
- **Lateral (directional)**—away from the median plane
- **Lateral recumbency**—the patient is lying on his/her side; can either be right or left lateral recumbency
- **Lateral saphenous vein**—a large vein that runs the lateral surface of the hind legs
- **Lavage**—the cleaning of a hollow organ through irrigation or flushing
- **Left**—the patient’s left side
- **Leptospirosis**—a bacterial zoonosis that is transmitted through the bodily fluids of an infected animal and attacks the kidneys and liver. It can also be passed through water, food, soil, and bedding that is contaminated with urine, ingestion of infected tissue, and bites from infected animals
- **Letterhead paper**—a simple template with the veterinary facility’s name and address in the top region of the paper, either centered, left- or right-justified; often used for writing letters to clients or other facilities
- **Leukocytes**—white blood cells (WBC)
- **Liability**—a legal obligation or debt
- **Liability insurance**—insurance covering the insured against losses arising from injury or damage to another person or property
- **Lice**—a general name for species-specific parasitic insects which infest mammals
- **License Requirement**—declares unlawful the practice of veterinary medicine by any person not licensed or holding a temporary permit to practice in the state
• Ligated – to tie a vessel with suture material to prevent bleeding
• Low power lens – the 10x objective lens on the microscope that is used for scanning the slide
• Lumbodorsal muscles – the muscles of the lower back just lateral to the spine
• Lyme Disease – an acute, often recurrent polyarthritis of dogs, cats and humans caused by the spirochete *Borrelia burgdorferi* and transmitted via tick
• Lyophilized – a product that is rapidly frozen and dehydrated under high vacuum; usually biologics such as vaccines
• Lysis – destruction of cells
Maggots – fly larvae of some species that appear as white, worm-like structures

Malpractice – improper or negligent treatment of a patient by a veterinarian, resulting in injury, damage, or loss

Mandible – the lower jaw

Mange – a skin disease of domestic animals, caused by a number of genera of mites

Mange mites – also known as Sarcoptes scabiei or scabies mites, these mites produce a condition called sarcoptic mange that causes extreme itching in the host due to the tunneling of female mites into the skin where they lay their eggs

Mason Meta Splint – a spoon-shaped device used to splint the metatarsus or metacarpal bones in animals. May be made of plastic or metal and of variable sizes and lengths.

Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) – chemical manufacturers and importers shall obtain or develop a material safety data sheet for each hazardous chemical they produce or import; employers shall have a material safety data sheet in the workplace for each hazardous chemical which they use

Maternal antibodies – antibodies acquired through the placenta or colostrum

Mayo stand – the stand on which surgical instruments are placed for use during surgical procedures. Made of stainless steel with height adjustment and wheels, the Mayo stand can be adjusted to fit close to or over the end of the surgery table so the surgeon can access the sterile items easily without reaching across the surgical table and breaking sterile technique.

Medial – toward the median (center) plane

Medical history – includes past information regarding a patient’s health

Medical ultrasonography – an ultrasound-based diagnostic imaging technique used to visualize muscles and internal organs, their size, structures and possible pathologies or lesions

Meniscus – the curved upper surface of a non-turbulent liquid in a container that is concave if the liquid wets the container walls and convex if it does not

Metacarpal bones – the bones of the front paws

Metatarsal bones – the bones of the rear paws
• **Methemoglobinemia** – a lack of oxygen or presence of methemoglobin in the blood resulting in cyanosis
• **Microbe** – a microorganism, especially a bacterium that causes disease
• **Microbicidal** – a substance that is destructive to microbes
• **Microbiology** – the branch of biology that deals with microorganisms and their effects on other living organisms
• **Microhematocrit centrifuge** – a type of centrifuge that holds smaller capillary tubes
• **Microhematocrit tubes** – also known as crit tubes; very small, thin tubes usually made of glass that has openings on both ends. The tube is filled with a sample of blood to obtain the PCV (packed cell volume) and TP (total protein)
• **Microorganism** – an organism of microscopic or submicroscopic size, especially a bacterium or protozoan
• **Middle ear** – consists of three small bones used for conducting sound, an air-filled cavity called the bulla and a thin tube called the eustachian tube (used for equilibrium) that leads from the bulla to the back of the mouth. The middle ear is separated from the outer ear by a thin membrane called the tympanic membrane, more commonly referred to as the eardrum
• **Midline** – the imaginary line that divides the body into two halves
• **Milliamperage (mA)** – milliamperes are a unit of [electrical] current that is equal to one thousandth (10^-3) of an ampere. The milliamperage setting controls the quantity of electrons boiled off the filament of the x-ray tube.
• **Milliamperes-seconds (mAs)** – indicates the exposure time in fractions of a second
• **Mitchell marker** – used in radiology when standing radiographs are taken; the small lead balls fall toward gravity
• **Mites** – any arthropod of the order Acarina (except ticks); characterized by minute size with a transparent or semi-transparent body
• **Mixed breed** – a dog who is born from parents who are not of the same breed and at least one of the parent’s breeds is known
• **Model Veterinary Practice Act** – published by the AVMA to be used as a guideline for the development of individual State Practice Acts
• **Modified live (MLV)** – made from an isolate of virus or bacteria. The virus has been attenuated, meaning the virus cannot cause disease but it can reproduce in the body cells and stimulate immunity
- **Molars** – teeth larger than premolars and used for crushing and grinding food
- **Morphology** – the form and structure of an organism or one of its parts
- **Mucous membranes** – the lining membranes and cells that produce mucous
- **Multidose vaccine vial** – vaccines that are pre-mixed but are not packaged by individual dosage
- **Muscle relaxants** – reduce muscle contractility by blocking the transmission of nerve impulses or by decreasing the excitability of the motor end plate or by other actions
- **Myiasis** – both the infestation of tissue by fly larvae and any disease resulting from an infestation of tissue by fly larva
- **Myoglobin** - an iron-containing protein found in muscle fibers, consisting of heme connected to a single peptide chain that resembles one of the subunits of hemoglobin. Myoglobin combines with oxygen released by red blood cells and transfers it to the mitochondria of muscle cells, where it is used to produce energy.
N

- **Nail bed** – the area immediately around the nail where it is imbedded in the skin
- **Nail quick** – the pink, sensitive part of the nail close to the nail bed that contains nerves and blood supply
- **Narcotics** – addictive drugs that reduce pain, alter mood and behavior, and usually induce sleep or stupor. Natural and synthetic narcotics are used in medicine to control pain
- **Nares** – nostrils or nasal openings
- **Nasogastric tube** – a tube that passes through the nose, down the esophagus, and into the stomach
- **Neck brace** – also known as a “bite-not” collar; keeps the patient away from his/her back end by limiting movement of the head through restraint of the neck while still allowing access to the front legs
- **Necropsy** – the examination of a cadaver to determine or confirm the cause of death
- **Necrotic** – dead or devitalized tissue
- **Negative reinforcement** – a method of training that requires punishing the animal for performing an undesirable behavior
- **Negligence** – failure to exercise the degree of care considered reasonable under the circumstances, resulting in an unintended injury to another party
- **Neonates** – newborns
- **Neuter** – to remove both testes from the male of the species; also known as orchidectomy or castration
- **Nictitating membrane** – also known as the “third eyelid,” this membrane is clear and provides extra protection to the eye.
- **Nits** – lice eggs
- **Non-core vaccines** – vaccines that should only be given to animals who are at increased risk of exposure to a disease
- **Non-elective surgery** – a medical emergency that must be dealt with immediately through surgical procedure (i.e., fractured limbs)
- **Non-pathogenic** – not capable of causing disease
• **Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatories (NSAIDs)** – drugs used to reduce inflammation without steroids

• **Nosocomial infections** – infections which are a result of treatment in a hospital or a health-care service unit, but secondary to the patient's original condition

• **Notoedres cati mites** – these mites infest mainly cats but will occasionally infest rabbits as well. They are visually similar to *Sarcoptes* mites and are found mainly on the ears, neck, face, and feet

• **NPO** – “Nothing per os,” meaning “do not feed or give water or anything by mouth”

• **Nursing** – the provision of services essential or helpful to the restoration of health or the prevention of illness for others who for any other reason are not able to provide such services for themselves; the promotion, maintenance, and restoration of health

• **Nymphs** – lice that are between their egg and adult stages
O

- **Objective lens** – the lens or system of lenses in a telescope or microscope that is nearest the object being viewed
- **Observe** – to be or become aware of, especially through careful and directed attention; to notice
- **Occluding a vein** – applying pressure in such a way that circulation is blocked and blood pools in the vein; the vein then pops up, making it more visible and tangible to the venipuncturist
- **Ocular** – pertaining to the eye
- **Offensive threat posture** – canine body language that indicates that he/she is aggressive and ready for attack; a dog in this posture will have his/her tail up and stiff, hackles up, ears forward, nose wrinkled, corners of mouth forward, and will be standing tall and forward on his/her toes
- **Oil immersion lens** – the 100x setting on the microscope that is used to differentiate bacteria and cytology and confirm the morphology of cells
- **Oliguria** – abnormally small production of urine; can be a symptom of kidney disease or obstruction of the urinary tract
- **Onychectomy** – medical term for declawing cats’
- **Ophthalmic** – of or pertaining to the eye
- **Ophthalmic medications** – medications that are dropped on the eye
- **Oral** – of or pertaining to the mouth
- **Oral medications** – those administered by mouth
- **Orchidectomy** – removing both testes from the male species; also known as neutering or castration
- **Organic material** – matter that has come from a recently living organism (including feces, urine, blood, vomit, etc.); is capable of decay or the product of decay; or is composed of organic compounds
- **Otic** – *(see also aural)* of or pertaining to the ear
- **Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)** – the bureau that aims to ensure employee safety and health in the United States by working with employers and employees to create better working environments
• **Otodectes cynotis mites** – also known as ear mites, these parasites are commonly seen in dogs, cats, and ferrets. They live in the external auditory canal of the host and are accompanied by bacterial decomposition of ear wax causing the formation of a black, waxy substance and can be passed from pet to pet

• **Otoscope** – an instrument used to examine the ear canal

• **Otoscopic examination** – an examination of the ears

• **Out-guide** – a simple manila folder or cardboard sheet that is inserted in the place of a withdrawn file folder and signifies that a file has been taken from the shelf. It commonly has fields for writing the date the file was pulled and the name on the file

• **Ovariohysterectomy (OHE or OVE)** – removing the ovaries and uterus from the female of the species; also known as spaying

• **Over-the-Counter (OTC)** – medications that can be purchased without a prescription

• **Oxygen flush valve** – part of the anesthesia machine, this valve allows pure oxygen to fill the reservoir bag by bypassing the vaporizer, therefore not filling the reservoir bag with anesthetic gas
• **Packed cell volume (PCV)** – also known as the microhematocrit or “crit”, is the percentage of whole blood that is made up of erythrocytes (red blood cells)

• **Palpate** – to examine or explore by touching an organ or area of the body, usually as a diagnostic aid

• **Palpebral reflex** – eyelid (blinking) reflex

• **Parasiticides** – an agent that is destructive to parasites

• **Parasitism** – a relation between organisms in which one lives as a parasite on another

• **Pasturella infections** – if a dog or human is bitten by an infected dog, he/she may develop purulent (full of pus) infections and abscesses. This is caused by *Pasturella*, which is a common bacterial inhabitant of a dog’s mouth

• **Patency** – the state or quality of being open, expanded, or unblocked

• **Pathogen** – an agent that causes disease, especially a living microorganism such as a bacterium or fungus

• **Pathogenic** – capable of causing disease

• **Pathology** – the scientific study of the nature of disease and its causes, processes, development, and consequences

• **Patient** – an animal that is examined or treated by a veterinarian

• **Patient medical record folder** – a folder provided by the veterinary facility that is often given to the client upon the patient’s first visit; this folder includes the hospital’s name, address, and phone number and is made to assist the client in organizing all of his/her pet’s veterinary bills and receipts. It also may include data sheets for the client to record vaccinations, laboratory examinations, annual examinations, drug allergies, or other information regarding the patient’s health

• **Patient record** – the part of the client record containing patient information

• **Peak kilovoltage (kVp)** – the maximum kilovoltage applied across an x-ray tube

• **Pedal reflex** – the reflex pertaining to the feet

• **Pediculosis** – the state of being infested with lice

• **Percutaneous** – through the skin

• **Perineum** – the pelvic floor and structures associated with the pelvic outlet
■ **Periodontal disease** – disease that pertains to the teeth and gums
■ **Periorbital vessels** – the veins around the eye
■ **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)** – safety equipment provided by veterinary hospitals that can help to prevent harm to the veterinary staff
■ **Pharyngostomy tube** – a tube placed surgically through the left side of the pharynx, just behind the angle of the jaw that goes down the esophagus into the stomach. It is left in place and used for feeding patients liquid meals and medications.
■ **Phlebitis** – inflammation of a vein, often occurring in the legs and involving the formation of a thrombus, characterized by swelling, pain, and change of skin color
■ **Pinna** – ear flap
■ **Pitting Edema** – an accumulation of fluid under the skin which, when pressure is applied, leaves an indentation
■ **Plasma** – the liquid portion of whole blood that has retained clotting factors, but does not have red and blood cells or platelets present. To obtain plasma, the whole blood must have been treated with an anticoagulant
■ **Platelet** – cells in the blood that are responsible for the clotting of whole blood; also called a thrombocyte
■ **Play bow** – the motion of a dog bowing by lowering the front of his/her body but keeping his/her hind end and tail up; a dog demonstrating this behavior is indicating that he/she wants to play
■ **Pollakiuria** – frequent urination
■ **Polyarthritis** – inflammation of several joints
■ **Polychromatic** – having or exhibiting many colors
■ **Polydactyl** – having several digits (toes); cats that have extra toes and are referred to as polydactyl cats
■ **Polydipsia** – excessive or abnormal thirst
■ **Polyuria** – increased urine production. Polydipsia and polyuria often go hand and hand and is abbreviated as **PU/PD**
■ **Pop-off valve** – part of the anesthesia machine that, when in the open position, relieves excess pressure from the breathing circuit and reservoir bag which leads directly into the endotracheal tube and lungs. It works directly with the reservoir bag; therefore, an over-inflated reservoir bag with the pop-off valve closed prevents a patient from exhaling his/her lungs and can cause death
• **Positive reinforcement** – a method of training that involves rewarding the animal for properly performing the desired behavior

• **Postmortem autolysis** – the digestion of cells through the enzymes within cells occurring after death

• **Post-surgical or post-anesthetic period** – the time from when the incision is closed until the patient has woken up

• **Pre-anesthetic classification** – patients who are to be anesthetized are evaluated and given a pre-anesthetic classification (or surgical assessment score) in order to decipher how healthy the patient is to handle anesthesia and surgery

• **Premolars** – teeth used for crushing and cutting food

• **Pre-op** – pre-operative or before surgery

• **Prepuce** – the sheath of the dog’s penis

• **Prescription** – a written order, especially by a physician, for the preparation and administration of a medicine or other treatment

• **Pressure manometer or ventilation pressure gauge** – a gauge on the anesthesia machine that allows you to visually monitor the pressure within the breathing circuit

• **Primary infection** – an infection that the patient presents with (comes in for) upon physical examination

• **Primary flight feathers** – feathers located at the outer end of the bird’s wing and are numbered from 10 to 1 starting at the outermost (distal) feather

• **Proboscis** – the piercing mouthpart used by female mosquitoes to suck blood from their hosts

• **Prognose** – to predict the probable course and outcome of a disease

• **Proximal** – toward the patient’s body (extremity)

• **Pruritis** – intense itching

• **Psychogenic polydipsia** – excessive thirst caused by a mental disorder

• **Psychological restraint** – the least restrictive type of restraint; utilizes both sound and touch to subdue a patient

• **Pulse** – the rhythmical throbbing of arteries produced by the regular contractions of the heart

• **Pulse oximeter** – a photoelectric device used to measure oxygen saturation in blood
• **Pupil** – the opening in the middle of the iris that appears as the dark center of the eye; the pupil constricts in bright light or dilates in dim light to allow as much light into the eye as possible

• **Purulent** – consisting of or containing pus

• **Purr** – the low, vibrating sound made by a cat by the contracting of the laryngeal muscles and the diaphragm as he/she breathes

• **Pyometra** – an accumulation of pus in the uterine cavity
Q

- **q_d** – abbreviation for “every day”
- **q_h** – abbreviation for “every ____ hours”
- **qid** – abbreviation for “four times daily in 24 hours”
- **qod** – abbreviation for “every other day”
- **qs** – abbreviation for “quantity sufficient”
- **Quadriceps group of muscles** – the group of muscles located in front of the femur in the hind leg
- **Quantitative buffy coat (QBC) analyzers** – a type of hematology analyzer; these systems estimate cell numbers instead of providing an accurate reading – thus, they are best used for screening rather than a true count. The QBC system derives measurements from an expanded buffy coat layer created after centrifuging in a microhematocrit tube
- **Quaternary Ammonium Compounds (QAC)** – a large group of related compounds, some of which are used as low-level disinfectants. They are effective against bacteria, but not against some species of *Pseudomonas* bacteria or bacterial spores.
- **Queen** – an in-tact female cat

R

- **Rabies** – a highly fatal viral infection of the nervous system that affects all warm-blooded animal species, transmitted in the saliva. The most common transmission of this disease occurs via bite
- **Rabies certificate** – a certificate issued to the owner of a pet when the pet receives a rabies vaccination
- **Radiation dosimeter** – also called a film badge, this is commonly a pen-like, ring-like or badge-like device that measures the cumulative dose of radiation received by the device. It is usually clipped to the staff member’s clothing to measure his/her personal exposure to radiation
- **Radiology** – the use of ionizing radiation for medical diagnosis, especially the use of x-rays in medical radiography or fluoroscopy
• **Ready to Go (RTG)** – an abbreviation used to indicate that the patient can be discharged

• **Reagent** – a substance used in a chemical reaction to detect, measure, examine, or produce other substances

• **Recovery log** – used to document post-surgical administration of drugs, the routes through which they were administered, and the times they were performed

• **Recumbency** – when an animal is lying down, it is referred to as recumbency. There are three different types of recumbency, sternal, lateral, and dorsal

• **Red mange** – a condition caused by *Demodex* mange mites

• **Reefer’s or reef knot** – a common, simple binding knot based on the square knot with a half bow that secures two lengths of rope or gauze together

• **Reference laboratory** – tests are performed in an off-site, commercial laboratory

• **Referral form** – a letter stating why the patient record must be transferred, where it is being transferred from, and where it is being sent to, is prepared and sent to the receiving facility

• **Refraction** – the turning or bending of any wave, such as a light or sound wave, when it passes from one medium (such as air) into another (such as urine) of different density

• **Refractive index** – the refractive index of a sample shows the concentration of solid particles in the liquid sample, thus indicating protein concentrations. The measurement is displayed on a refractive index scale when you view the specimen through the refractometer

• **Refractometer** – a medical hand-held instrument also known as the total solids meter; the refractometer is an optical instrument that utilizes light waves to view the refraction and measure the refractive index of a solution.

• **Renal** – pertaining to the kidneys

• **Respiratory monitor** – an instrument used to watch and attend to the patient’s breathing

• **Respiratory rate** – a count of the amount of times a patient breathes within a minute. The inhalation-exhalation cycle is counted as one breath

• **Reticule** – a shape superimposed on an image that is used for precise alignment of a device; in the case of the refractometer, the image is a scale with measurements inscribed on it
• **Retrieval basket** – an instrument used with endoscopy which permits removal of small, round and smooth foreign bodies, usually from the gastrointestinal tract

• **Revolutions per minute (RPM)** – the rate of revolution of a motor

• **Rhinoscopy** – endoscopy of the nose

• **Right** – the patient’s right side

• **Righting reflex** – governed by the cat’s eyes and balance organs (such as the Eustachian tube) in their inner ear, a cat’s righting reflex allows him/her to twist his/her body in order to land consistently (though not exclusively) on his/her feet when falling or jumping from heights

• **Ringworm** – a common fungal infection of the superficial layers of the skin and hair fibers with one of a group of dermatophytic fungi and can cross species

• **Rostral** – toward the tip of the patient’s nose

• **Rope** - a length of fibers, twisted or braided together to improve strength for pulling and connecting; a piece of rope includes the following parts:
  - o **End** – the shorter part of the rope
  - o **Standing portion** – the longer part of the rope
  - o **Bight** – a bend or fold in the length of a rope
  - o **Loop** – a full circle is formed in the rope; one end of the bight crosses over the other portion of the rope, creating a loop in the rope
  - o **Knot** - a method for fastening or securing rope by tying or interweaving
• **Safe-light** – a light bulb shielded by a plastic filter that stops any light to which the film is sensitive from penetrating the filter and entering the darkroom

• **Salmonella bacteria** – any of various rod-shaped bacteria of the genus *Salmonella*, many of which are pathogenic, causing food poisoning, typhoid, and paratyphoid fever in humans and other infectious diseases in domestic animals

• **Sarcoptic mange** – a condition caused by mange mites that causes an extreme amount of pruritis (itching) in the host due to the tunneling of female mites into the epidermis where they lay their eggs. Characteristics of an infestation of these mites include scabby, crusty, itchy skin in infected areas. Intense irritation is caused in the host so frantic scratching and subsequent hair loss and sores may result

• **Sarcoptes scabiei mites** – also known as mange mites and Scabies mites, these mites produce a condition called sarcoptic mange that causes extreme itching in the host due to the tunneling of female mites into the epidermis where they lay their eggs. This can be zoonotic

• **Scanning lens** – the rare 4x objective lens on some microscopes

• **Scatter radiation** or **radiation scatter** – the deflection of radiation from its original path; what occurs when a portion of the radiation from the primary x-ray beam is not absorbed by the object or matter being radiographed

• **Sclera** – this is the “white” of the eye that covers the majority (approximately three-quarters) of the back of the eye. It is a dense, opaque, and somewhat stretchy network of fibrous connective tissue.

• **Scruff** – the loose skin on the back of an animal’s neck

• **Secondary infection** – an infection resulting from another treatment

• **Secondary flight feathers** – feathers located between the primary flight feathers and the body of the bird

• **Sedative** – having a soothing, calming, or tranquilizing effect

• **Sediment** – the solid portion of a liquid sample, often found after centrifugation at the bottom of the sample tube

• **Separation anxiety** – a behavioral condition in which the pet becomes extremely stressed and anxious within approximately 30 minutes of being separated from his/her owner
• **Serum** – the liquid portion of the blood that separates out after coagulation, free from any cellular components such as blood cells or platelets and lacks residual clotting factors

• **Shadow** – an area that is not or is only partially irradiated or illuminated because of the interception of radiation by an opaque object between the area and the source of radiation

• **Sharps** – needles or blades

• **Shock** – a state of circulatory collapse in animals with a loss of blood flow to cells and organs, thereby depriving them of oxygen and other nutrients following surgery or trauma

• **Signalment** – the patient description information that must be added to chief complaint forms by a member of the veterinary staff as opposed to the owner of the patient which includes the patient’s name, species, breed, description, date of birth, gender and reproductive status

• **Single dose vaccine vial, pre-mixed** – these vaccines are pre-mixed and packaged by individual dosage

• **Single dose vaccine vial with a diluent** – these vaccines come in two parts, the lyophilized vaccine (freeze dried) and its diluent (liquid portion). The diluent may be sterile water, or could be an active ingredient of the vaccine that cannot be freeze dried

• **Skin to skin** – total length of surgery from beginning of incision to completion of closure

• **SOAP notes** – a patient’s progress notes written in his/her record, including:
  o **S – Subjective** – observations made by the client and the reason he/she is bringing the patient to the veterinarian, also known as the chief complaint; this section also contains patient history
  o **O – Objective** – observations made by the veterinarian during the initial physical examination. The veterinarian’s patient examination notes are included in this section.
  o **A – Assessment** – the diagnosis is entered here by the veterinarian
  o **P – Plan** – includes the action plan for different follow-up procedures or treatments

• **Solute** – a substance dissolved in another substance, usually the component of a solution present in the lesser amount
• **Spaying** – removing the ovaries and uterus from the female of the species; also known as ovariohysterectomy

• **Specific gravity** – also known as urine specific gravity or the urine concentration, the specific gravity is the ratio of the mass of a solid or liquid (urine) to the mass of an equal volume of distilled water at 4°C (39°F)

• **Speculum** – an instrument used to expose the interior of a body passage or cavity

• **Spermatic chord** – a fibrous tissue that suspends the testes

• **Sphygmomanometer** – an instrument that is used to measure blood pressure in the arteries

• **Spirochete** – a highly coiled bacterium

• **Square knot** – used whenever tension is to be applied; tension causes the knot to tighten

• **Stains** – series of chemical dyes used to stain the cells of a sample on a slide so they can be viewed under a microscope; the most commonly used stains in veterinary medicine are the Romanowsky-type stains, which include Wright’s stains, Giemsa stains and quick stains such as Diff-Quik®

• **State Practice Act** – each state’s set of laws that governs the practice of veterinary medicine

• **Statutory law** – a law or group of laws passed by a legislature or other official governing bodies

• **Steam autoclave** – a machine that is used to sterilize surgical instruments utilizing heat, pressure, and time

• **Sterilization** – to make free from live bacteria or other microorganisms; sterilization kills all organisms, pathogenic and non-pathogenic

• **Sternal recumbency** – the patient is lying chest down on his/her stomach

• **Sternum** – the breastbone

• **Stethoscope** – an instrument used to listen to body sounds

• **Stifle** – the knee

• **Stomatitis** – inflammation of the mouth

• **Styptic powder** – an astringent powder that stops the bleeding if the quick of an animal’s nail is cut

• **Subcutaneous injection (SQ)** – the drug is injected just underneath the skin (between the skin and muscle layers)
• Subcutaneously – just underneath the skin, between the skin and muscle layers
• Subgingival – the area of the teeth below the gum line
• Subgingival cleaning – the cleaning of the area of the teeth below the gum line
• Superficial (external) – toward the surface (whole body or part)
• Supernatant liquid – the fluid component of a sample
• Supragingival – above the gum line
• Supragingival calculus – calculus that occurs along the exposed surface of the tooth, generally extending above the gum line
• Supragingival cleaning – the cleaning of the area of the teeth above the gum line using mechanical scalers
• Surgery log – an accumulative record accounting for all surgeries performed on-site. It is kept in the surgical suite throughout all surgical procedures and is then filed for future reference. The surgery log book is used to meet both legal and Animal Hospital Association (AAHA) requirements
• Surgical assessment score (SAS) – patients who are to be anesthetized are evaluated and given a pre-anesthetic classification (or pre-anesthetic classification) in order to decipher how healthy the patient is to handle anesthesia and surgery
• Surgical incision – a cut made into a tissue or organ
• Surgical packs – sterile packs that include the essential instruments and tools required for specific surgeries
• Surgical period – the period during surgery from incision to closure
• Surgical site – the area on the patient in which the surgical incision will be made
• Suture – stitches that hold the incision closed
• Swaged-on needles – pre-attached suture needles that come attached to the suture material
• Swelling – an abnormal increase in size, as by inflation, distention, accumulation of fluids, or the like
T

- **Tabby** – a striped cat; indicates the pattern, not color
- **Tachometer** – a dial that adjusts the speed at which the head of the centrifuge will spin
- **Tarsal joint** or **tarsus** – the “ankle” joint or hock of a dog or cat’s hind leg
- **Technique chart** – a table with predetermined x-ray machine settings that enables the radiographer to select the correct machine settings based on the thickness of tissue and of the anatomical portion of the body to be radiographed
- **Temperature probe** – an instrument used to keep track of the patient’s body temperature
- **Terminal digit filing** – a system of filing medical records in which files are grouped together by the last 3 digits of their identification numbers. The first 2 numbers of the identification number signify the order of the files
- **Tetanus** – this is generally rare in dogs; however, the microorganism that causes tetanus can be passed to humans through deep bite wounds. If the affected human has not had a recent tetanus shot, they should seek immediate medical advice regarding antiserum. Even if one has been recently vaccinated, he/she should still seek medical attention.
- **Thomas splint** – a splint extending the full length of the limb, holding the limb in a fixed position and transferring body weight from the limb to the splint; this splint extends the leg from the shoulder
- **Thorax** – the patient’s chest
- **tid** – abbreviation for “three times daily in 24 hours”
- **Timed method of hand washing** - involves scrubbing for five minutes on each hand, covering all surfaces of the fingers, hands and arms
- **To effect** – intravenous drugs are given “to effect”, meaning a certain amount is injected initially, and the remainder is slowly introduced to the patient until he/she is sufficiently on an anesthetic plane that allows the surgeon to perform surgery without the patient waking up
- **Topical medications** – medications that are applied on the surface of the skin
• **Tortoiseshell** – describing the color and pattern of a cat with a black and orange (or grey and buff) blotched or speckled coat

• **Total protein (TP) or serum protein (SP)** – also known as total serum protein and total plasma protein; a biochemical test for measuring the total percentage of protein in blood plasma or serum; concentrations below the reference range usually reflect low albumin concentration

• **Toxoplasmosis gondii** – a contagious disease of all warm-blooded species caused by a sporozoan parasite. Can cause sporadic cases of pneumonia, central nervous system disease, retinochoroiditis, and hepatitis in dogs and cats

• **Tragus** – a small, protruding piece of skin commonly covered in fur that borders the opening of the ear canal nearest to the patient’s face

• **Transdermal** – through or by way of the skin

• **Transducer** – a device that receives a signal in the form of one type of energy and converts it to a signal in another form, the probe of the ultrasound machine

• **Treatment board** – a white board displayed in a high-traffic region of the treatment area of the veterinary facility. This is one of the main forms of communication within the facility for each day. Each patient that is in the facility for hospitalization, surgeries, treatments, blood test or grooming for that day should be listed on this board

• **Triceps** – muscles which are located on the shoulder

• **Trombicula mites** – commonly referred to as harvest mites or chiggers, these parasites are usually visible as yellow, orange or red specks on the faces of dogs and cats. They have six legs in their adult stage. These mites are unusual as they are only parasitic during their larval stage, and they also do not burrow into the skin or feed on blood

• **Tuberculosis** – a mycobacterial, infectious disease of humans and animals caused by the tubercle bacillus and characterized by the formation of tubercles on the lungs and other tissues of the body, often developing long after the initial infection

• **Tungsten** – a heavy grey-white metallic element; the pure form is used mainly in electrical applications

• **Turbid** – having sediment or foreign particles stirred up or suspended; muddy; cloudy
• **Tympanic membrane** – a thin membrane that separates the middle ear from the outer ear; also called the eardrum
U

- **Ultrasonic** – beyond the audible range; relating to sound waves having a frequency of more than 20,000 cycles per second; or relating to acoustic frequencies above the range audible to the human ear, or above approximately 20,000 hertz
- **Ultrasonic cleaning** – utilizing ultrasonic waves to clean surgical instruments. Ultrasonic waves cause the formation of minute gas bubbles which form shock waves when they collapse
- **Ultrasonography** – a diagnostic imaging technique utilizing reflected high-frequency sound waves to delineate, measure, or examine internal body structures or organs
- **Ultrasound** – ultrasonic sound; the use of ultrasonic waves for diagnostic or therapeutic purposes, specifically to visualize an internal body structure, monitor a developing fetus, or generate localized deep heat to the tissues
- **Umbilicus** – the scar marking the site of the attachment of the umbilical cord; belly button
- **Ungual process** – the bony projection over which the nail or claw arises; the ungula process also contains blood and nerve supply.
- **Universal precautions** – measures taken whenever there is a possibility of infection from a patient or their bodily fluids to the handler
- **Urethra** – a narrow tube from the bladder that urine travels down to exit the body
- **Urinalysis (U/A)** – the official term for the examination of urine
- **Urobilinogen** – the precursor of urobilin and a product of the reduction of bilirubin
V

- **Vaccination** – inoculation with a vaccine
- **Vaccine** – a weakened or killed pathogen, such as a bacterium or virus, or a portion of the pathogen’s structure that upon administration stimulates antibody production or cellular immunity against the pathogen but is incapable of causing severe infection
- **Vacutainer system** – a collection of tools used to collect and store small quantities of blood; the system utilizes test tubes with different colored tops, and the colors indicate the presence or absence of anticoagulants. The tubes contain a vacuum that draws blood out of the patient and into the tube
- **Vaporizer(s)** – the anesthesia machine’s vaporizer is specifically designed to store liquid anesthetics until oxygen or nitrous oxide gas mixes the liquid into a gas. Each anesthetic has its own vaporizer. Vaporizers are calibrated and recorded in percentages
- **Venipuncture** – the surgical puncture of a vein, or the placement of a needle or catheter directly into the blood vessel for the purpose of administering drugs or fluids or taking a blood sample
- **Ventral** – the lowest portion of the abdomen; in directional terms, it means toward the patient’s belly
- **Veterinarian** – a person who has received a professional veterinary medical degree from a college of veterinary medicine
- **Veterinarian-Client Confidentiality** – part of the Model Veterinary Practice Act created by the AVMA, this section reflects the ethical obligation of veterinarians and their employees to consider information from clients and veterinary medical records privileged and confidential
- **Veterinarian-Client-Patient Relationship (VCPR)** – part of the Model Veterinary Practice Act created by the AVMA, this section added in 2003, this section emphasizes not only that veterinary medicine must be practiced within the context of a veterinary-client-patient relationship, but that it cannot be established via telephone or electronic means alone. However, once established, it may be maintained via telephone, etc.
- **Veterinary Technicians and Technologists** – part of the Model Veterinary Practice Act created by the AVMA, this section was inserted due to the AVMA’s belief that it is
important for the Board to have authority over the practice of veterinary technology and to discipline technicians who have not fulfilled all necessary requirements

- **Vital signs** – an index of an animal’s essential bodily functions including temperature, pulse, respiratory rate, heart rate and body weight
- **Voiding** – applying pressure to a patient’s bladder so he/she is forced to urinate; usually done while the patient is sedated or anesthetized

**W**

- **Waiver of Confidentiality** or **Consent for Disclosure form** – a legal document that allows the primary hospital to send the patient record or the information inside the record to the other facility
- **Walk-in clients** – clients who did not schedule an appointment; they are treated depending on availability and severity of the patient’s condition
- **Walking dandruff** – a condition caused by *Cheyletiella* mites and named “walking dandruff” because as the mites move along their host, they resemble large, moving flakes of dandruff.
- **Wright's stain** – a Romanowsky-type stain used to stain cells so they can be examined under the microscope

**X**

- **X-ray** – a high-energy stream of electromagnetic radiation having a frequency higher than that of ultraviolet light but less than that of a gamma ray; a form of electromagnetic radiation, similar to light but of shorter wavelength and capable of penetrating solids and of ionizing gases

**Y**

- **Yowl** – a yowl (also known as a howl) is a loud, usually deep-throated version of the earlier-mentioned “meow” made by cats.
Z

- **Zoonosis** – diseases of animals transmissible to humans