



Kv9 Clinical Trial Standard Operating Procedures – Handling of Canine Patients
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CONTROLLED DOCUMENT

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Safe Lifting of Dogs

1. Purpose

To establish clear guidelines for the safe lifting of canine patients, ensuring the safety and well-being of both the dogs and the personnel involved.

2. Scope

This SOP applies to all clinical staff, veterinary technicians, researchers, and students involved in the handling or lifting of dogs enrolled in the trial.

3. General Guidelines

- Dogs weighing more than 20 kg should only be lifted onto examination tables when necessary and always by at least two individuals. When possible, conduct examinations and treatments at ground level to minimize lifting.
- Avoid placing pressure on any tumours or surgical sites during handling.
- Personnel must lift using proper body mechanics, bending at the knees rather than the back to prevent injury.
 - If personnel have an pre-existing injury then they must find someone to assist or replace them lifting.
 - If no-one is available then the dog must be treated on the floor.

4. Documentation

All lifting-related incidents must be recorded in this incident register.

5. Training Requirements

All relevant personnel must receive training in safe lifting techniques during onboarding, with annual refresher training to ensure continued competence.

Handling of Dogs

1. Purpose

To establish a standardized method for the safe, low-stress, and humane handling of canine patients.

2. Scope

This SOP applies to all veterinary personnel, including veterinarians, technicians, students, and research staff involved in any physical interaction with enrolled dogs.

3. Procedure

3.1 General Handling Principles

Always approach calmly and speak in a low, soothing tone.

Read the dog's body language: look for signs of fear, pain, or aggression.

Use minimum restraint necessary to perform the procedure safely.

Avoid sudden movements, loud noises, or excessive restraint.

3.2 Special Considerations for Cancer Patients

- Orthopaedic tumours (e.g., osteosarcoma): Do not lift or restrain by affected limb; provide support.
- Post-operative dogs: Avoid pressure near incision sites or drains.

3.3 Handling Techniques by Temperament

- Calm or friendly dogs:
 - Use verbal cues and gentle handling; allow voluntary participation when possible.
- Fearful or anxious dogs:
 - Allow time to acclimate.
 - Use treats and low-stress handling techniques.
 - If the above doesn't work, use anxious dog protocol and reschedule appointment.
- Aggressive dogs:
 - Use muzzles only when necessary and appropriate.
 - Involve two trained staff members.
 - If deemed unsafe to handle – exit from trial.

4. Injury Prevention for Staff

Avoid placing hands near the dog's mouth unless necessary.

Keep fingers out of collars during restraint.

Do not lift large dogs alone; follow lifting SOP for dogs >20 kg.

Report all bites, scratches, or near misses to the supervising veterinarian.

5. Handling Aids and Alternatives

Use treats, toys, or praise to encourage cooperation.

Use sedation or chemical restraint when:

- The procedure cannot be safely performed otherwise.
- The dog is in significant pain or distress.
- Authorized by the veterinarian.

6. Documentation

Record any behavioural concerns, restraint methods used, and any incidents (e.g., aggression, injury).

Note any changes in temperament over time.

Anxious Dog Protocol

1. Purpose

To provide a standardized approach for managing dogs with anxiety during clinical trial appointments aiming to minimize stress for the patient and improve the safety and quality of care.

2. Scope

This SOP applies to all veterinary staff involved in the treatment of dogs identified as anxious or stress-prone during the clinical trial.

3. Procedure

3.1 Pre-Appointment Preparation

- Make a clear note in the patient's file identifying them as an "anxious" dog.
- Prescribe or confirm prescription of one or both of the following medication:
 - Gabapentin 10–20 mg/kg, orally, two doses per visit:
 - First dose: Night before the appointment.
 - Second dose: 1–2 hours before the appointment.
 - Clonidine 0.01-0.05mg/kg, orally, two hours before the appointment

3.2 At the Appointment

3.2.1 Preparation

- Prepare all necessary equipment and supplies before interacting with the dog.
- If the waiting area is a known stressor, instruct the owner to wait with the dog in the car until staff are ready.

3.2.2 History Taking

- Begin with a calm discussion with the owner before touching or examining the dog.
- Confirm known anxiety triggers and discuss any previously successful strategies.

3.2.3 Positive Reinforcement and Handling

- Use treats, calm encouragement, and allow the dog to approach voluntarily.
- Proceed slowly, taking breaks as needed to reduce stress.
- After treatment, give the dog time to relax and end the visit on a positive note using praise or treats.

3.3 After the Appointment

3.3.1 Follow-Up

- During follow-up communication, ask the owner for feedback regarding:
 - The dog's behaviour and stress level during the visit.
 - Suggestions for improving future appointments.
- Document the feedback in the patient's medical record for future reference.

4. Documentation

- Mark the patient record clearly as "anxious"
- Record medication prescribed and confirmed administration.

- Log all observations and strategies used during the visit.
- Document owner feedback and suggested improvements.
- Notify the clinical team of any updates to the dog's behaviour or recommended handling changes.