

Semen Freezing FAQ:

Why should I freeze semen on my dog?

Freezing semen is a good way to preserve bloodlines for future use. It is also beneficial for dogs with a demanding event schedule or who are in guardian homes/co-ownerships that cannot be easily accessed. Freezing semen is also a way to continue using a valuable stud dog after neutering. Storing semen ensure good quality semen available at any time.

When is the optimal time to freeze semen from my dog?

Ideally semen should be collected from males between 18 months and 4 years of age. Past 5 years of age, the incidence of prostatic disease increases which has an adverse effect on semen quality. While an older male can still be frozen, a better collection can be expected from a young, mature dog (two to five years old). Therefore, it is better to collect and store a dog at a young age based on potential, rather than wait until a male is in great demand but unfortunately much older.

Ensure the male has been fit and healthy both at the time of collection and for the previous few months. A sick, or stressed dog will not provide a quality collection. Furthermore, a high fever in the past can adversely affect semen quality for several months after the event. If the male is over 6 years old, has a history of prostatic disease, or has questionable fertility, it may be advisable to have a semen evaluation and "test-freeze" performed before committing to storage of large amounts of semen.

Semen Evaluation parameters

After semen collection, the semen is evaluated to determine if the semen is of sufficient quality to freeze. At this point, if semen quality is marginal, a decision can be made to delay freezing to another time, or to investigate potential causes for the poor quality semen. If the semen is of good quality and meets the minimum required standards to be frozen, the sperm rich fraction of the ejaculate is diluted in a special fluid called "semen extender" and cooled to 4°C over several hours before being loaded into 0.5 ml straws and rapidly frozen to -196°C in liquid nitrogen. The freezing extender contains a number of ingredients to protect the sperm through the cooling, freezing and thawing process. The ingredients include egg yolk, antibiotics, and cryoprotectants to protect the sperm during freezing.

After semen has been frozen, a drop will be thawed to determine post-thaw motility. This information is used to determine the amount of frozen semen needed per insemination. The owner can decide whether to have additional semen frozen depending on the number of inseminations desired for storage.

Semen Freezing Costs

Collection and freezing of canine semen is a complex multi-step process. Each step must be performed in the appropriate time frame and at the appropriate temperature to ensure survival of the semen post freezing. Each step is outlined below.

1) **Initial set up and paper work \$30.00.** This includes thawing of buffers and preparation of the room. This fee will be charged upon making the appointment unless cancelled 24 hours in advance.

2) **Semen Collection for Freezing \$45.00.** This is the actual collection of the semen sample. It is charged when we attempt collection of the male. It is best if there is a teaser bitch in heat available or if the male is accustomed to hand collections. Males that have not been collected previously should be worked with and accustomed to the procedure prior to scheduling a freezing appointment.

3) **Semen Freezing \$300.00.** This is the actual freezing process and entails multiple steps. Due to this being a multi-step process, if the semen does not survive any one of the steps, the price will be pro rated to the point we have reached in the freezing process.

4) **Semen Evaluation Post Thaw \$25.00.** After freezing the straws, 1 to 3 straws will be thawed for post thaw motility evaluation. This helps to determine how many straws are needed for each breeding.

The total for the above 4 steps is \$400.00. See below for additional charges that may be associated with semen freezing.

1) **Physical Exam.** All NEW patients will have a complete physical exam at a cost of \$50.00.

2) **Brucellosis testing.** Each male must have a negative brucellosis test and a copy of the negative lab results within 3 months of freezing. In house brucellosis testing can be performed the day of the collection/freezing at a cost of \$40.00.

3) **Microchip implantation.** Each stud must have a permanent identification prior to collection. If this is not present, it can be performed the day of collection at a cost of \$60.00.

4) **DNA Testing.** This is a requirement by AKC for any AKC registered stud on which semen is collected for freezing. If you do not already have a DNA profile, a sample can be obtained the day of collection at a cost of \$50.00. This sample will be mailed the day of collection and typically takes about 6 weeks for the AKC to process.

5) **Storage of semen.** All semen will be stored on-site, and there is a monthly storage fee of \$10/month for up to 30 straws per owner, which will be billed on January 1st of each year (pro-rated for the year at the time of collection).

6) **Shipping and retrieval of the semen.** There is no cost to retrieve your frozen semen samples for personal use, however, if enough doses are available, you are welcome to have a post-thaw motility evaluation done prior to use (\$25). The cost of shipping samples varies depending on destination. Domestic shipments will be handled in-house, but for international shipments, we ship your sample to Zoetis Reproductive Services, and they take it from there.

Setting up your freezing appointment

We freeze semen as a scheduled appointment on Wednesday mornings. This allows our staff sufficient time to process the samples. Your appointment should take no more than 30-60 minutes total. Please call the office (970-787-2282) to schedule. Please indicate the appointment is for freezing and that you have received the necessary information. You will be required to complete a ***Semen Freezing Contract*** and a ***Semen Collection Statement*** at the time of check-in.

What to bring to your semen freezing appointment?

- 1) For AKC registered dogs, please bring a copy of the dog's AKC registration that will remain in the medical record.
- 2) For AKC registered dogs, we also need an AKC DNA profile which can be obtained at the time of semen freezing, if needed.
- 3) It is advised to bring a teaser bitch in estrus if possible.
- 4) We require a current Brucella canis test for all dogs (within the last 6 months). If needed, blood for this can be obtained at the time of semen collection for freezing and the test is run in-house for immediate results.

