

*“Pearls”  
of  
Veterinary Medicine*



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## Cardiology

### Chagas and HRV (Heart Rate Variability)

A study of 112 dogs with Chagas disease (*Trypanosoma cruzi*) found heart rate variability (HRV) disruptions in 63% and ECG abnormalities in 98% of cases—including asymptomatic dogs—demonstrating widespread cardiac and autonomic dysfunction. Symptomatic dogs had more arrhythmias. HRV monitoring with a 24-hour Holter can detect abnormalities before clinical signs appear, supporting its value for early diagnosis and better management, especially since many cases are missed. Chagas disease is a significant, underdiagnosed “One Health” concern in the US, affecting up to 18% of dogs in the South. Veterinarians should proactively screen at-risk dogs (using IFA or ELISA serology), including those with unexplained heart disease. Kissing bugs (*Triatoma spp*) can infest any home, regardless of socioeconomic status, and dogs can act as sentinels for human infection.

See *Cap Rep* (May 2025).43(7):2 for a review of Chagas Disease in Dogs

[Madigan, R. et al. JAVMA 263\(7\), 888-895](#)

[Veterinary Vertex podcast](#)

[Cap Rep](#) (2025).43(8):1

## Critical Care – Surgery – Nursing

### Feeding tube placement and care

This [article](#) provides an excellent, comprehensive resource to consult before placing a feeding tube or when encountering issues such as clogging, accidental removal, or infection. Key tips highlighted by the author include:

Use 0 Prolene suture, which is durable against sharp toenails.

Consider using the [Miracle Nipple O-ring Syringe](#), which tolerates frequent use and is also ideal for feeding orphaned animals.

Protect and cover e-tubes with a [Kitty Kollar](#).

Maintain stoma site hygiene by cleaning with a dilute bleach solution (1/4 teaspoon bleach in 1/2 cup water, yielding a 0.008% solution) for five minutes twice daily.

When declogging tubes, only use a 60 ml syringe to avoid excessive pressure [\[ref\]](#); also consider using [Avanos Clog Zapper](#), a papain and pancreatic enzyme mixture.

Prevent feeding tube clogs by flushing with 10–15 ml of water before and after feeding or administering medications, and use at least 5 ml of water between each medication.

Wash all equipment used to make the slurry after each use with warm soapy water. Sanitize items by soaking them in a solution made from 2 gallons of water and 2 tablespoons (30 mL) of chlorine bleach for 2 minutes. After soaking, remove the items and let them air dry; do not use a towel to dry them.

Additionally, a [summary sheet](#) is available for determining the correct viscosity of feeding slurries (target level 2–3). A [video](#) demonstration of the procedure is available (see minutes 18–19), which shows that achieving a level 2 flow corresponds to 4–8 ml of slurry remaining in a 10 ml syringe after 10 seconds of dripping. Detailed instructions for measuring food and liquid consistency are available [here](#).

[Tolbert, MK. et al. TVP \(2025\); 15\(4\):30-36](#)  
[Cap Rep](#) (2025).43(8):1



SCAN ME