Chapter 22

Monitoring Temperature, Pulse and Respiration

Summary

In this chapter, the learning outcomes are:

- To identify methods for and describe the assessment of temperature, pulse and respiration (TPR) in the animal
- To describe factors that can affect TPR assessments

The skill of observing and monitoring life signs is essential to the nursing of any species of animal. It involves the comparing of normal behaviour against that which is abnormal. Time spent with an animal, using all senses, is most important. The nurse should be capable of recognising minute changes to the animal’s life signs and temperament.

Temperature, pulse and respiration or breathing can all vary in animals due to environmental temperature, recent exercise, stress situations and excitement. An increase or a decrease in the rate of these life signs can also indicate a problem with a body system or that a disease is present. These life signs should be checked hourly or, until an animal is stabilised, more frequently.