

Drawing Blood/Venipuncture in Camelids

Many vets have never drawn blood on a camelid before so I asked Dr Gina Bromage to write some advice that you can give to your vet or AHO if they may need it. Her advice entitled venipuncture in camelids is below.

I hope you found this information useful.

Kindest regards
Dianne Summers

Venipuncture in camelids

The operator can identify the prominent lateral spines of the 5th and 6th cervical vertebrae by palpating caudally along the ventrolateral neck on the right hand side. C5 is slightly the more prominent of the two. (The oesophagus runs on the left side, so the right is better for venipuncture). These vertebrae are towards the thoracic inlet; even the 5th cervical vertebra is more than 2/3 of the way down the neck.

The thumb of the left hand should be used to occlude the jugular vein against the lateral spine of C5 (or C6, but I find C5 easier). The filling jugular can be palpated with the fingers of either hand to determine its course above your thumb. It is easier if clipped, but not impossible with reasonably fine, clean fleece. If the fleece is coarse or matted, clipping will be necessary.

The needle should be directed cranially, at an angle with the jugular, but parallel with its course, as for normal jugular venipuncture. The sternomandibularis muscle runs over the site, so you will probably need a needle at least 1" long. The carotid is nearby too, so if the blood looks very bright, that's what you've tapped.

Although the vein is more superficial just below the angle of the jaw, the skin there is very thick, so it is difficult to tap the vein high up.

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