Consent to Perform Bronchoalveolar Lavage (BAL)

Patient name:_____ MRN #_____
Pet owner's name:_____
Cell phone number during/after procedure _____

Introduction
This document explains bronchoalveolar lavage (BAL) and covers the rationale, benefits, risks, and alternatives. You should recognize that medicine is not an exact science, and the outcome cannot be guaranteed. We encourage you to ask us questions to make a well-informed decision.

Explanation of the Procedure
"Bronchoalveolar" refers to the deep airways/tissue of the lung, and "lavage" means washing. We wash the airways to sample cells and secretions for laboratory analysis using sterile saline and withdraw as much of the fluid as possible for analysis. Your pet will be anesthetized to allow us to pass a clean tube through the mouth and down into the airways. In the case of bronchoscopically-guided BAL, a long, thin camera (endoscope) will be inserted to visually examine the inside of the airways. This method allows us to see mucus, redness, foreign material, tumors, or misshapen airways, and allows us to obtain BAL samples from specific lung lobes. In the case of "blind" BAL, a tube without any camera part to it will be inserted into the airways, which means a sample will be retrieved from a random airway and no internal inspection of the airways will occur. In either case, fluid obtained will be examined for cell count and cell type and may be sent for special testing such as bacterial culture. The number and kinds of cells we find, as well as results of special tests, will allow us to rule out some potential causes of disease. It may, or may not, lead us to make a specific diagnosis as to what is causing respiratory disease (for instance, we might find tumor cells, fungus, or bacteria).

Other procedures planned for your pet at the same time as the BAL:

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Rationale/Benefits
We hope to find evidence to help us determine the cause (or rule out other causes) of your pet's respiratory clinical signs. The BAL is not a treatment, but we hope it will help find a diagnosis for a treatable disease.

Risks
The BAL procedure requires general anesthesia. Although anesthesia is performed routinely with good outcomes, it does bring risks, including the risk of death. These risks may be increased for an animal with respiratory disease. In general, the length of time needed for anesthesia for bronchoscopically guided BAL is longer than the time needed for blind BAL.

The most important risk of BAL is hypoxemia, or an inability to supply oxygen to the blood. A mild degree of hypoxemia is expected, and usually resolves quickly after the procedure has been completed. The risks of hypoxemia are often worse in animals with respiratory disease, mostly because these animals may already have trouble with breathing. To minimize the risk,

supplemental oxygen will be provided to your pet both before and after the BAL is completed. Sometimes, the pet may need continued oxygen supplementation even after waking up from anesthesia and may require spending a night in the hospital for oxygen supplementation and observation. In extreme situations, an animal may need ventilatory support by machine. While it is rare, BAL can lead to death of the patient with respiratory disease.

Other risks include exacerbated cough, or very rarely airway/lung infection, fever, hemorrhage that can cause coughing of blood, punctured airway or lungs, or cardiac arrest.

Finally, there is a risk that we will not find a specific cause of your pet's illness despite performing the BAL.

Alternatives to the Procedure
Other tests may help with the diagnosis of respiratory disease, including imaging tests, blood tests, and more. However, BAL is one of only a few methods that allow a determination of the cell and/or bacterial type in the airways. Other options may include transtracheal lavage or lung biopsy. Although treatment can also be based on an educated guess as to the cause of the disease (i.e., empiric therapy), without more information we are unable to determine a specific diagnosis and therefore cannot know with confidence how best to treat your pet.

Authorization
By signing this form below, you agree that:

- You understand how/why the procedure is likely to help us treat your pet
- You understand what will be done to your pet during the procedure
- You understand the known risks that go with the procedure, and understand that unforeseen complications may occur
- You understand that the procedure may not produce the results we hope to achieve
- You understand the alternatives to this procedure for your pet
- You agree that you have been given time to ask questions about the procedure, and that these have been answered satisfactorily.

Signature of pet owner/owner's agent   Date: _____

_____

Witness to consent (signature)

_____