



Quick Guide to Animal Emergencies

Your Pet's Personal File

Name _____
Legal Name _____
Sex: M _____ F _____ Neutered: Yes _____ No _____
Date of Birth _____

Vaccination History:

Date _____ Details _____
Date _____ Details _____
Date _____ Details _____
Date _____ Details _____
Date _____ Details _____

Medical History:

Date _____ Details _____
Date _____ Details _____
Date _____ Details _____
Date _____ Details _____
Date _____ Details _____

Accident Record

Time _____
Date _____
Incident details _____

CPR start time _____
CPR stop time _____
Notes _____

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Introduction

This kit is intended to help you assist your pet by reducing pain and suffering until you can reach your veterinarian. We have compiled the supplies you will need for most situations and recommend that you read through this quick guide so that you are prepared.

- In an emergency, try to phone the veterinarian or emergency clinic to help them prepare for your arrival.
- Prevention of illness and injury is the primary goal of pet first aid courses and should result in a decline of unnecessary illness and injury.
- Ensure at least one member of the family has pet first aid training.
- Ask local veterinarians about potentially poisonous plants, animals and environmental conditions to avoid.
- When planning extended trips, we suggest that you contact your veterinarian for over the counter medicines and proper dosages for your pet.

Do's and Don'ts of Pet Care

Do's

- Take your pet for regular veterinary check-ups.
- Feed a high quality and nutritionally balanced pet food.
- Keep your pet safely confined.
- Exercise your pet daily.
- Leave your pet with shade and water.
- Spay or neuter your pet unless you intend to breed it.
- Keep medications and poisons away from your pet.
- Use parasite control as appropriate and as advised by your veterinarian.
- Provide your pet with a warm and loving environment.
- Use appropriate restraint and wear gloves when handling ill or injured animals.

Don'ts

- Do not leave a choke collar on an unattended pet.
- Do not feed prior to a car ride.
- Do not leave a pet in a hot or partially closed car.
- Do not chain a dog where it can hang itself.
- Do not put a pet on medication until you have checked with a veterinarian.
- Do not feed dog food to a cat or vice versa.
- Do not give aspirin or aspirin substitutes to a cat.
- Do not use pesticides or antiseptic products on a cat.
- Do not leave dryer or oven doors open if you own a cat.

Rashes, Skin Irritations and Itches

Signs

- pain, distress
- swelling
- hot spots
- constant attention to specific areas, licking/scratching

Action

- Trim away hair.
- Clean area with antiseptic wipe.
- Apply hydrocortisone cream.
- Distract your pet for 15 minutes to keep your pet from licking the cream so that it can begin to work.

Gastric Dilation and Bloat

An accumulation of gas and food in the stomach causing swelling. Occurs more often in larger breeds.

In some cases the stomach rotates on its axis (torsion) cutting off the blood supply to the spleen and stomach resulting in life-threatening shock.

The cause of bloat is unknown, however, in nearly all cases there is a history of overeating, consumption of fermented foods, drinking excessively after eating, or vigorous exercise after a meal.

Signs

- excessive salivation
- extreme restlessness
- attempts to vomit and defecate
- abdominal pain and distension
- pacing and restlessness
- stretching
- looking at the abdomen
- anxiety

Action

- Bloat can be fatal if untreated; survival depends on your understanding of the symptoms and transporting the animal to the veterinarian as soon as possible

Phone Numbers

Animal Emergency Clinic _____

Veterinarian _____

Humane Society _____

Poison Center _____

Fire Department _____

Police Department _____

Neighbor/Relative

Name _____

Phone _____

Taxi _____

Emergency Approach

- Check safety, it is of no benefit to the animal if you are hurt trying to help them.
- Remain calm.
- Get help, it is safer for you to have another person to assist with restraining the animal.
- Assess condition and prioritize what needs attention.
- Check responsiveness, is the animal responding to voice and touch? If no response, check breathing and pulse (see Artificial Respiration and CPR). If responding, check for other injuries and treat for shock (see Shock).
- Stabilize animal and transport to a veterinary hospital.

Remember to restrain injured animals prior to administering first aid.

Wounds

Impaled Objects (*object still in wound*)

Action

- Restrain as appropriate.
- Do not remove object.
- Flush wound with PVP iodine.
- Build up trauma pads around the wound and secure with stretch gauze, adhesive tape and cohesive bandage.
- Transport immediately to veterinarian.
- All puncture wounds should be seen by your veterinarian for removal of any foreign matter.

Sucking Chest Wound

An object penetrates the chest cavity and air enters the chest around the lungs.

Signs

- distress
- difficulty breathing
- audible “sucking” noise
- animal will go into shock

Action

- Restrain as appropriate.
- Apply dressing over the wound and secure with stretch gauze, adhesive tape and cohesive bandage.
- Treat for shock.
- Transport to veterinarian.

Closed Wounds

A blow from a blunt object can cause a closed wound. A cat's skin closes quickly after being bitten, yet there is great danger of infection.

Signs

- limping
- swelling and heat
- pain, distress
- scratches around area

Action

- Restrain as appropriate.
- Cut away excess hair.
- Clean wound with antiseptic towelettes.
- Bathe area in cold water or apply ice pack.
- Transport to veterinarian.

Treating Cuts and Open Wounds

Signs

- pain, distress
- limping
- shock
- visible bleeding
- swelling
- withdrawal
- licking or consistent attention to localized area

Action

- Calmly secure your pet by wrapping the animal in a towel or blanket. (If the wound is bleeding excessively, go directly to the red action below)
- Gently cut hair from around the wound.
- Flush the wound with Eye & Skin wash.
- Apply PVP iodine to wound area.
- Place gauze pads over the wound area and apply pressure until bleeding stops.*
- Don't remove blood-soaked pads; just add another on top with gauze roll and secure with adhesive tape.
- Cohesive bandage may be wrapped over stretch gauze to secure bandage for extended periods.
- For severe wounds, transport your pet to the veterinarian immediately.
- Call your veterinarian about mild abrasions or cuts for further treatment.

Transportation

Restraint

Due to pain, injured or ill animals can be unpredictable.

- Dogs should have a muzzle or mouth tie restraint applied before first aid is attempted unless vomiting or bleeding from the mouth.
- Cats should be wrapped in a towel to prevent them lashing out with their claws.



Transportation

- If possible, transport animals in a cage.
- Small muzzled dogs or cats can be transported wrapped in a towel.
- Support the back when transporting.
- Keep an injured leg up.
- Keep an injured chest down to allow for lung freedom.

Note: Unnecessary movement of an injured animal will increase pain and may cause further injury.

Vital Signs

Pulse

Place a hand over the heart or feel the femoral artery.

- To feel the heartbeat, grasp the chest with one hand behind the animal's elbows.
- Move your hand slightly until you feel the heartbeat.
- To feel the pulse in the femoral artery, place fingers on the inside of the back leg where it joins the body and move them slowly until you feel the arterial pulse.



Respiration

- Respirations can be checked by watching for chest movement.
- If there is none visible, double-check by holding a hand or tissue in front of animal's nose to feel or see movement as it breathes.

Bleeding

External Bleeding

Bleeding from minor cuts will stop within a few minutes. Severe bleeding needs immediate first aid. If untreated it can lead to shock and eventually death.

Action

- Restrain animal.
- Place gauze pads over the wound area and apply pressure until bleeding stops.
- Cover wound with clean gauze and secure.
- If bleeding continues reinforce dressing.
- Transport animal to veterinarian.

Ear: An animal will shake its head when an ear is cut, preventing blood clotting. Bandage head and secure with tape, nylon or sock.

Footpad: Firm pressure bandage should be applied.

Penis: Bleeding can be slowed by using cold compresses. If there is a female in heat present, remove the male from the area as an erection will cause uncontrollable bleeding.

Remember: Full extent of an injury may not be visible. Have animal checked by a veterinarian.

Internal Bleeding

Signs

- history of trauma
- signs of shock
- distress and pain
- elevated pulse
- visible bleeding from ears, nose and/or mouth
- coughing up/vomiting red or brownish blood

Action

- Restrain as appropriate.
- Treat for shock.
- Access immediate veterinary assistance.
- Give nothing to eat or drink.

Burns

The severity of a burn depends on its depth into the tissue and the percentage of the body affected.

Minor burns do not extend to the tissues below the skin whereas major or third degree burns do.

Minor burns

Signs

- singed hair and redness of skin
- pain, blistering and swelling

Action

- Restrain as appropriate.
- Apply cold compresses or submerge area in cold water.
- Apply sterile dressings and bandage lightly.

Major burns

Signs

- singed hair, redness and blistering of skin
- charred appearance of tissues
- pain and swelling
- reluctance of the animal to move

Action

- Restrain as appropriate and cover burned area with gauze pad wetted with sterile eye and skin wash.
- Treat for shock and transport at once to a veterinarian.
- Monitor airway, breathing and circulation.
- Only replace body fluids if instructed by a veterinarian.

Note: Make sure the area is safe before dealing with the animal, especially in the case of electrical burns.

Artificial Respiration

Signs of Respiratory Arrest

- obvious trauma
- cyanosis (blue lips and tongue)
- no chest movement

Action

- Pull tongue forward.
- Clear any visible objects.
- Close animal's mouth tightly.
- Place your mouth over the animal's nose.
- Blow into the nose until chest rises. Adjust volume of breath to the size of the animal.
- Remove your mouth following each breath to allow air to escape.
- Repeat 10 times giving 1 breath every 3 seconds.
- Reassess breathing.
- If animal is still not breathing transport to a veterinarian. Continue artificial respiration during transportation.



Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation

This procedure is performed only when there is no heart beat and no breathing—cardiac and respiratory arrest.

Signs

- unconsciousness
- no breathing
- no heart beat felt with hand
- no pulse (femoral artery)

Action

- Lay animal on its right side on a firm flat surface.
- Extend head and neck and pull tongue forward.
- Remove any visible foreign objects.
- One person performs mouth to nose and the other chest compressions at a rate of 4 compressions to 1 breath (see method, next page).
- Continue CPR as animal is transported to the veterinarian.

Heat / Cold Injury

Body temperatures below 100°F (37.7°C) or above 104°F (40°C) are considered an emergency (normal body temperature is 100.5°F (38°C) to 102.8°F (39.3°C)).

Frostbite (*freezing of body tissue*)

- scaling and leathery feel of the skin
- tissues appear whitened and waxy

Action

- Handle carefully and warm up slowly.
 - Move inside to shelter and wrap in blanket.
 - Immerse in lukewarm water until tissues are flushed.
- The thawing process is very painful. If at all possible transport animal to a veterinarian.

Hypothermia (*lowering of core body temperature*)

- shivering (will stop as severity increases)
- stiff muscles
- low pulse and respiration rate
- cold to touch and body temperature below 95°F (35°C)
- lethargy leading to unconsciousness

Action

- Move animal to shelter and warm with blankets.
- Give warm liquid/sugar mixture to drink.
- Access veterinary care immediately.

Heat Stroke (*inability to lower body temperature*)

- panting and brick-red gums
- anxiety
- increased heart rate
- increased temperature
- difficulty breathing
- confusion
- vomiting/diarrhea
- seizures, coma

Action

- Move animal to cool, shaded area.
- Submerge in cold water or spray with hose.
- Stop cooling process and dry the animal when temperature reaches 104°F (40°C).
- Encourage animal to drink.

Foreign Objects

Porcupine Quills

- Restrain as appropriate.
- A few quills can be removed without sedation.
- Grasp the quill close to the skin using needle nose pliers, and slowly pull straight out.
- Wipe the wounds with antiseptic towelette and apply triple antibiotic ointment.

Note: A large number of quills or quills that are deep inside the mouth should be removed by a veterinarian. If a quill breaks when being removed, mark the location and have the animal checked by a veterinarian.

Fish Hooks

- Gently withdraw hook if barbed portion has not penetrated the skin.
- If barb has penetrated, push hook forward until the barb sticks out of the skin. Cut shank off the hook and remove it.
- Clean wound with antiseptic towelette and apply triple antibiotic ointment.

Grass Seeds

These can become lodged in the animal's nose, ears, feet, between the toes or in the throat.

- Restrain as appropriate.
- If the object is visible, try to remove it gently.
- Do not use force, instead access veterinary care.
- Clean with antiseptic towelette and apply triple antibiotic ointment.

Small Animal (1 to 5 pounds)

- One hand supports the spine while the other grasps the chest firmly.
- Squeeze in on both sides of the chest gently but firmly to a depth of 1/2 to 1 inch (1.3 to 2.5 cm) 80-120 compressions per minute with one breath after every 4 compressions.



Large Animal

- Place hands on the lower half of the animal's chest immediately behind the elbow.
- Chest is compressed 1 to 2 inches (2.5 to 5 cm) 80 to 120 compressions per minute with one breath after every 4 compressions.



Ideally CPR should be performed by 2 people.

If there is only 1 person, remember to position the head and pull the tongue forward before each breath.

Shock

Shock occurs when there is not enough oxygen circulating to meet the needs of the vital organs. If untreated the animal will die.

Signs

- pale gums and lips
- weak and rapid pulse
- rapid, shallow, irregular breathing
- dilated pupils
- cold skin and legs
- weakness
- dizziness
- collapse, unconsciousness

Action

- Restrain as appropriate.
- Handle animal gently and keep it quiet.
- Control any bleeding.
- Check airway, breathing and circulation.
- Keep warm and transport to a veterinarian.
- Do not give anything to eat or drink.

Bee Stings and Insect Bites

Signs

- pain
- swelling
- licking or consistent attention to localized area
- weakness
- irritation

Action

- Remove stinger by scraping at the base with a card (do not grasp stinger with forceps as this will inject more poison).
- Clean area with antiseptic wipe.
- Apply insect sting swab.
- Apply hydrocortisone cream.
- Distract your pet for 15 minutes to keep your pet from licking the cream so that it can begin to work.

Snake Bites

Signs

- fang marks from bite (*may be difficult to see through hair*)
- swelling (*may progress over 24 hour period*)
- pain
- redness
- signs of shock
- blood does not clot
- bruising
- weakness
- breathing stops
- twitching and drooling

Action

- Attempt to identify the snake being careful not to get bitten.
- Check to make sure the animal is breathing, perform CPR as needed.
- Watch for signs of shock and keep the animal calm and still. Movement may cause the venom to spread more quickly.
- Put on gloves and wash the wound. *Do not cut the wound or attempt to suck out venom. Do not ice or use a tourniquet on the wound.*
- Transport to your veterinarian immediately.

Poisoning

Poisons can enter the body through swallowing, inhalation, absorption through the skin or injected into the skin as in insect or snake bites.



Signs

- pain
- vomiting/diarrhea
- ulcers around mouth
- excitability/lethargy
- weakness
- irritation of eyes
- unconsciousness
- respiratory arrest

Action

- If poison was inhaled, remove animal to fresh air.
- Try to identify poison.
- Restrain as appropriate.
- Contact veterinarian or poison center and follow instructions.
- Monitor airway, breathing and circulation.
- Never induce vomiting if the poison is an acid, alkali or petroleum product. Give water to dilute the poison.
- If the poison is on the animal's skin, flush with copious amounts of water.
- Always try to contact a veterinarian before treating an animal for poisoning.

Broken Bone

Signs

- inability to use limb
- pain
- swelling and discoloration
- deformity of the limb
- visible or protruding bone fragments

Action

- Restrain as appropriate.
- Treat any bleeding first.
- Move animal as little as possible.
- Place folded towel under leg for support.
- Transport to veterinarian.

Splinting

- Wrap the limb with gauze, making sure it is long enough to go above and below the fracture.
- Make a splint (tree branches, Sams Splint, rolled up newspaper...) and secure to both sides of the affected limb using adhesive tape and cohesive bandage.
- Place your pet on a board, blanket or towel for a stretcher.
- Transport to your veterinarian immediately.
- Watch for symptoms of shock or bleeding.



Choking

Signs

- difficulty breathing
- choking or gagging sound
- rubbing face on ground
- pawing at mouth
- bulging eyes
- cyanosis (bluish discoloration of the skin and mucous membranes)

Action

- Restrain animal.
- Open mouth, pull tongue forward and inspect throat. If foreign object is visible, grasp with your fingers and remove it.
- If unable to remove, perform the Heimlich Maneuver.

Heimlich Maneuver

Small Animal (1 to 5 pounds)

- Place cat or small dog on its side. Support spine with one hand. With other hand, grasp the abdomen just below the ribcage. Gently push in and up with hand below ribcage. Continue until object is expelled or until veterinary care is accessed.

Large Animal

- Place both hands below the ribs of large dogs. Press in and up. Repeat until object is expelled or veterinary care is accessed.



Eye Injury

Signs of Eye Injury

- rubbing and pawing at eyes
- photophobia (sensitivity or intolerance to light)
- swollen eyelid
- watering eyes
- eye tightly shut
- squinting

Foreign Bodies

- Restrain as appropriate.
- Separate eyelid and examine eye.
- Remove foreign bodies with clean cloth.

Note: Do not attempt to remove foreign object stuck to surface of eye. Irrigate the eye with eye wash and transport to a veterinarian.

Lacerations

- Restrain animal as appropriate.
- For eyelid, apply direct pressure.
- Secure pressure pad in place with bandages.
- Transport to a veterinarian.
- For eyeball, apply cold compress but do not apply pressure to injured eyeball.
- Hold head steady to prevent further injury.
- Transport to a veterinarian.

Prolapsed Eyeball (eye out of socket)

- Transport at once to a veterinarian.
- Keep eye moist with saline or eye and skin wash.
- Keep animal quiet and treat for shock.