

Pet First Aid



Pet First Aid Training and Care For Your Pets

Anyone can have a job. We have a passion.



Veterinarian Contact Information

Poison Control Contact Information:

Animal Poison Control Center

888.426.4435

Whether your pet is injured, seems to be mildly ill or in a life threatening emergency, this pet first aid booklet is in no way a substitute for medical advice from a veterinary medical professional.

Always contact a veterinarian for guidance.



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A Veterinarians Oath

Being admitted to the profession of veterinary medicine, I solemnly swear to use my scientific knowledge and skills for the benefit of society through the protection of animal health and welfare, the prevention and relief of animal suffering, the conservation of animal resources, the promotion of public health and the advancement of medical knowledge.



I will practice my profession conscientiously, with dignity, and in keeping with the principles of veterinary medical ethics.

I accept as a lifelong obligation the continual improvement of my professional knowledge and competence.

Handling Injured Animals

Any sick or injured animal should be approached with caution. An animal who has been traumatized, such as hit by a car, may think they have been attacked and react to a too-rapid approach as a threat.

Never run toward an animal that feels threatened or put your face too close to their mouth.

Even your own pet may not recognize you if they are agitated. An animal that is severely injured is best left to professional handlers such as animal control officers or veterinary healthcare workers. If the animal must be moved, careful restraint techniques should be used.

Blankets or towels can be used to cover and gently restrain small animals. Be sure to know where the animal's head and mouth are at all times.

If a leash is not readily available, one can be made by looping a rope or a belt.

Muzzles can be made from lengths of soft fabric - gauze, neck ties, or pantyhose. These can be used to loop over the dog's mouth to create an instant muzzle when tightened gently.

Restraining and Carrying an Injured Animal

Dogs

Hugging dogs around the neck and chest provides gentle restraints and keeps your face and hands away from their mouth.

To lift, slide the hand closest to the head down and between the front legs or in front of the chest; and the other arm under the pelvis or behind the back legs; depending on the size of the dog and the type of injuries.



Cats

You may use the scruff of the neck to hold and restrain but some adult cats can feel threatened, may object to being scruffed like a

kitten, and react badly; therefore proceed with caution. A gentler approach is to hold around the back of the neck to control the head, then support the body by cradling the hind end under your other arm. Cats usually do very well with scruffing, but do not dangle them. Be sure to support the body with your other arm.



What Normal Looks Like

Learning your pet's normal behavior will allow you to recognize abnormal signs that could potentially signal a problem.

Finding A Heartbeat

You can feel the heartbeat on the left side of the chest, at the point where the elbow would touch the chest when the legs are bent. Finding a heartbeat is easiest when the animal is laying on its right side. You may also find the pulse by gently pressing on the groove along the inner thigh when the animal is lying down on either side.

Once you have found the heartbeat, it is important to have the ability to distinguish what is normal for your particular pet. Below are normal heart rate ranges dependent on the size and species of the pet.

Dogs

Puppy: 120-160 beats per minute

Small Dog: 100-160 beats per minute

Medium Dog: 60-100 beats per minute

Large Dog: 60-100 beats per minute

Cats

All sizes: 160- 220 beats per minute

Normal heart rates for birds and other small mammals are usually too high to be able to count accurately, and normal heart rates for reptiles and amphibians are usually too low in order to obtain an accurate count.

Heart rates that are significantly too slow or too fast may be a sign of a medical emergency.

Finding A Respiratory Rate

You can see the pet's respiratory rate by watching the rise and fall of his or her chest. You should also be able to see the chest expanding as the animal breathes.

If the abdominal wall is moving, but the chest is not, this may indicate a medical emergency.

If you cannot visually see the chest moving, sometimes you can feel or hear the air movement just by placing your ear near the pet's nose.

Dogs

Normal respiratory rate: 10-30 breaths per minute

Panting: <200 breaths per minute



Cats

Normal respiratory rate: 20-30 breaths per minute

Panting: <300 breaths per minute

* Cats will start panting when they are extremely frightened or in some time of distress.

If your pet is making abnormally loud noises or gasping for air while breathing, this is a medical emergency.

What Normal Looks Like

Finding Your Pet's Body Temperature

Using a pediatric rectal thermometer and lubricant, gently lift the pet's tail and insert the thermometer into the rectum.

Below are normal body temperatures for cats and dogs.

Dogs

Normal body temperature: 100° - 102.8°

Cats

Normal body temperature: 100° - 103°

Minor fluctuations in body temperature is normal for cats and dogs. Dogs have a tendency to lean towards the upper end of the spectrum, while cats have tendency to lean towards the lower end.



When To Worry About Your Pet's Body Temperature

Hypothermia

Hypothermia sets in when your pet's body temperature drops below the normal range. **Signs of hypothermia include:**



- Slow pulse
- Shallow breathing
- Disorientation
- Collapsing
- Unconsciousness

Hyperthermia

Hyperthermia, also known as heat stroke, sets in when your pet's body temperature is elevated above the normal range. Signs of hyperthermia include:

- Rapid heart beat
- Panting
- Disorientation
- Collapsing
- Unconsciousness

Avoid placing a heat or cooling source to try and normalize your pet's temperature quickly. Drastic changes in body temperature can predispose your pet to pneumonia.

Contact your veterinarian immediately.

Capillary Refill Rate



Capillary refill is the rate at which blood refills empty capillaries. Mucous membranes are the gum tissues in the oral cavity and the conjunctiva of the eyes. These let you determine the oxygen flow and blood pressure of almost any animal.

Measuring Capillary Refill Rate

To determine the capillary refill rate gently lift the upper or lower lip to observe the color. Gently press your fingertip on the gum tissue. The tissue should turn white and then quickly return to pink within 2 seconds. The mucous membranes should look pink in color.

Color changes such as pale yellow, grey, blue or bright red can indicate a medical emergency.

A delayed capillary refill rate can also be a sign of a medical emergency.

Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR)

Attempting CPR and rescue breathing requires that you put yourself in very close contact with an animal's face and mouth. Most animals do not have the intention of hurting anyone, but in times of distress, an animal may feel threatened.

Do not attempt CPR or rescue breathing on a conscious animal, even if it is your own.

Airway

Lay dogs and cats on their side so the tongue falls to the side of the mouth. This opens the airway safely. Carefully check for an obstruction. This is done by opening the mouth.

Do not put your fingers inside the animals mouth.

Breathing

Close your hand around the animals muzzle, sealing the lips. Place your mouth around the nose of the animal and gently blow air into the nostrils. You should see the chest walls move.

You may continue this pattern until you reach the veterinary hospital.

Please be aware that if you do not get a response in the first few minutes there is almost no chance of reviving the animal.

Shock

Shock is the body's reaction to trauma or blood loss. There can be different signs and stages.

How to recognize shock:

- **Low Body Temperature (hypothermia)**
- **Weak Pulse**
- **Prolonged Capillary Refill Rate**
- **Pale Mucous Membranes**
- **Rapid Heart Rate**



These signs, or any combination of these signs, may indicate a medical emergency.



Common Veterinary Medical Emergencies

- Allergic Reactions
 - Bleeding
- Birthing Emergencies
 - Poisons
 - Eye Injury
 - Heat Stroke
 - Frostbite
- Convulsions or Seizures
 - Urinary Blockage
 - Hit By Car
 - Bloating
 - Gastric Dilation
- Breathing Difficulty
 - Burns and Scalds

Basic Pet First Aid Kit

Keeping certain materials on hand can mitigate damage in the event of an emergency. If you have the proper first aid supplies, you may be able to forestall complications in an animal who has to be rushed to the veterinarian's office.

Below is a list of Basic Pet First Aid Kit items for your pet first aid kit. The purpose of the kit is to provide quick, simple, easy care to your pet when he/she requires very basic, immediate first aid treatment. These supplies are only for very basic situations, like a minor cut/scrape, a broken nail, an insect bite, small area of skin irritation or removing a tick. These supplies should only be used under the supervision of an adult.

1. Scissors
2. Tweezers
3. Sterile Eye Wash
4. Tape
5. Roll Gauze
6. Vet Wrap
7. Telfa Pads
8. Muzzle
9. Towel
10. Latex Gloves
11. Thermometer
12. Diphenhydramine (Benadryl)

For any care for more severe injuries, please contact your veterinarian or an emergency hospital.

Enhancing the human animal bond through
progressive and compassionate
veterinary care.

