

MY PET’S EMERGENCY INFORMATION

Owner’s name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Pet’s name: \_\_\_\_\_

Breed: \_\_\_\_\_

Age (or year of birth): \_\_\_\_\_

Sex: M F                      Neutered/Spayed? Yes No

Current medications: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Veterinarian

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency hospital

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

ASPCA Poison Control: 888-426-4435  
(There may be a fee for the call.)

Pet Poison Helpline: 855-764-7661  
(There may be a fee for the call.)

Nonemergency police phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Nonemergency fire department phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Animal control phone: \_\_\_\_\_

IF YOUR PET’S WOUND IS BLEEDING

- Use a clean cloth or towel to apply firm pressure directly over the bleeding site.
- Avoid checking to see if the bleeding has stopped until you’ve applied pressure for at least three minutes.
- If the bleeding is severe, immediately take your pet to the closest veterinary hospital. If you see blood soaking through the applied towel/cloth, do not remove it. Instead, add towels on top of previous layers to avoid disturbing any blood clots that might have formed.

IF YOUR PET HAS HEATSTROKE

- Signs of heatstroke include rapid breathing/heavy panting, excessive drooling, weakness or drowsiness, confusion, vomiting or diarrhea, and abnormally colored, dry or sticky gums.
- Take your pet to the closest veterinary hospital as soon as possible, and begin cooling them right away.
  - If your pet is in direct sunlight, move them to a shaded area or comfortably cool indoor environment.
  - Place towels wetted with room-temperature water gently around your pet’s neck, in the armpits, and in the groin area. Rewet and replace the towels every few minutes.
  - Avoid putting your pet in a tub of cool or cold water, which can make their condition worse.
  - If a fan is available, use it to directly blow cool air onto your pet.

Call your veterinarian or local  
veterinary hospital so they can be  
ready for your pet when you arrive.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT:  
American Veterinary Medical Association  
avma.org/FirstAid



(C) 2025 American Veterinary Medical Association

PET FIRST AID

Brought to you by your veterinarian  
and the American Veterinary Medical Association



mcm-0825



First aid care is not a substitute for veterinary care, but it may save your pet’s life until you can get them veterinary care. In case of an emergency, call your veterinarian or local veterinary emergency hospital so they can be ready when you arrive.

**FOR YOUR SAFETY**

An injury may not only cause your pet pain, but also fear and confusion. These things can make even the gentlest of pets unpredictable or even dangerous. To protect you both:

- Avoid any attempt to hug an injured pet.
- Keep your face away from your pet’s mouth.
- Apply a muzzle if your pet threatens to bite.
- Whenever possible, ask other people to help you move your pet.

**IF YOUR PET IS CHOKING**

Choking pets have difficulty breathing, paw a lot at their mouths, make choking sounds when breathing or coughing, and may have blue-tinged lips and/or tongue.

- If your pet can still breathe, try to keep them calm and immediately seek veterinary care.
- If possible without risking injury, open your pet’s mouth and look inside for foreign objects.
- If you see an object, gently try to remove it by using two hands to open the mouth, then using your fingers to grasp and remove the object. The flat side of a spoon may be used to pull the object closer, if needed. Be careful not to push the object further down the throat.
- For cats and small dogs, if the object can’t be removed with fingers, gently pick up your pet by their thighs and swing the animal in the air from side to side. If that doesn’t help to dislodge the object, apply forward pressure to the pet’s abdomen just behind the ribcage.
- For larger dogs, if the object can’t be removed with fingers, try the Heimlich maneuver. If your large dog is standing, place your arms around their belly, just like you would a person, and make a fist with your hands. Place your fist on the soft spot under their ribcage, then push up and forward. If the dog is lying down, place one hand on their back and use the other hand to squeeze the abdomen upward.

- Check for and remove any objects that have become loose.
- Immediately transport your pet to the closest veterinary hospital.

**IF YOUR PET IS UNCONSCIOUS AND NOT BREATHING**

- Open your pet’s mouth, gently grasp the tongue, and pull it forward so the tip is outside the mouth.
- Quickly check the mouth and throat for any foreign objects blocking the airway.
- Perform rescue breathing by holding your pet’s *mouth* closed with your hand and breathing directly into their *nose* until you see their chest expand. Once the chest expands, continue providing 10 rescue breaths per minute until your pet is breathing on their own or you arrive at the closest veterinary hospital.

**IF YOUR PET ALSO HAS NO HEARTBEAT**

- Start rescue breathing as described for nonbreathing pets, then position them and begin chest compressions:
  - For cats and most dogs, gently lay the pet on one side. For barrel-chested dogs (like English Bulldogs), gently lay them on their back.
  - For small dogs and cats, use one hand to encircle the bottom of the chest between your thumb and other fingers. Then, squeeze the chest between your thumb and fingers 100-120 times per minute (or to the beat of “Stayin’ Alive”).
  - For barrel-chested dogs, place your hands so that the heels of the hands overlap on the mid breastbone (sternum).
  - For other dogs, place your hands so that the heels overlap over the widest point of the chest or, if the dog is keel-chested (like Greyhounds or Doberman Pinschers), just behind the armpit. Then press down 100-120 times per minute, keeping your elbows locked.
- If the pet is lying on their side, aim to compress the chest cavity by about one-third (33%) to one-half (50%) of its total width. If the pet is on their back, compress the chest cavity by about one-quarter (25%) of its total width.
- If you’re alone, alternate the chest compressions with rescue breaths by performing 30 chest compressions and stopping long enough to give two rescue breaths, then repeating. If you have help, one person can give chest compressions and the other can give 10 rescue breaths per minute. Be sure to give rescue breaths with the animal’s neck and head aligned with their spine to avoid blocking the airway.

- Continue until you can hear and feel a heartbeat and your pet is breathing regularly, or you have arrived at the veterinary hospital and they can take over.

**IF YOUR PET HAS BEEN POISONED**

- If you know or suspect your pet has swallowed or contacted something harmful, immediately call your veterinarian, local emergency veterinary hospital, or one of these hotlines (a consultation fee may apply):

**ASPCA Poison Control** 888-426-4435  
**Pet Poison Helpline** 855-764-7661
- Have the product/container available for reference.
- Collect any vomited or chewed material and seal it in a plastic bag to take with you to the veterinary hospital.
- Do not try to induce vomiting or give any medication to your pet unless directed to do so by a veterinarian or poison control center.

**IF YOUR PET IS HAVING A SEIZURE**

- Clear the area of other pets, furniture, and any other objects that may cause injury.
- Do not try to restrain your pet or startle them out of the seizure.
- Avoid placing your fingers/hands in or near their mouth.
- If possible, time the seizure with a watch and video record it, for sharing with a veterinarian.
- After the seizure has stopped, keep your pet calm and quiet, and contact your veterinarian or local veterinary emergency hospital.

**IF YOUR PET IS INJURED**

- If possible and safe, try to stabilize the injury by bandaging or splinting it before moving your pet. Since a poorly applied bandage or splint can do more harm than good, leave this step to the veterinarian if you’re uncertain.
- If there’s a foreign object in the wound, do not try to remove it. If necessary, carefully trim the object without moving it, leaving 3 to 6 inches sticking out, before seeking veterinary care.
- While transporting your injured pet, keep them confined in a small area to reduce the risk of additional injury. Pet carriers work well, or you can use a box or other container (but make sure your pet has enough air). For large dogs, use a board, sled, blanket, or something similar to act as a stretcher.

**PET FIRST AID KIT CHECKLIST**

Keep a kit of basic first aid supplies for the pets in your household. Many items in a family first aid kit can be used for pets, too. Your veterinarian may recommend additional items for your kit based on your pet’s medical condition.

- ☐ Important phone numbers (veterinarian, emergency hospital, poison control, animal control, non-emergency police)
- ☐ A copy of your pet’s medical record, including any medications your pet is receiving
- ☐ Digital thermometer to take your pet’s temperature
- ☐ Muzzle to prevent bites (DO NOT muzzle your pet if they are vomiting.)
- ☐ Spare leash and collar
- ☐ Gauze roll for wrapping wounds or muzzling an injured animal
- ☐ Clean towels for restraining cats, cleaning, or padding
- ☐ Nonstick bandages or strips of clean cloth to control bleeding or protect wounds
- ☐ Self-adhering, nonstick tape for bandages
- ☐ Adhesive tape for securing bandages
- ☐ Scissors with blunt ends for safely cutting bandage materials
- ☐ Disposable gloves to protect your hands
- ☐ Small flashlight for examining eyes, wounds, etc.
- ☐ Tweezers to remove small foreign objects
- ☐ Eye dropper (or large syringe without needle) to give oral treatments or flush wounds
- ☐ Sterile lubricating jelly to protect wounds/eyes
- ☐ Activated charcoal to absorb poison (Use only if instructed to do so by your veterinarian or a poison control center.)
- ☐ 3% hydrogen peroxide to induce vomiting (Always contact your veterinarian or poison control center before inducing vomiting. Do not give more than one dose unless otherwise instructed by your veterinarian. Do not use hydrogen peroxide on wounds.)
- ☐ Saline solution for cleansing wounds or flushing eyes (Saline solution sold for use with contact lenses works well for most purposes.)