

## PET FIRST AID KIT CHECKLIST

Keep a kit of basic first aid supplies for the pets in your household. Many of the items in a family first aid kit can be used for pets, too.

- **IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS** (veterinarian, emergency clinic, poison control, animal control, non-emergency police)
- A copy of your **PET'S MEDICAL RECORD**
- **DIGITAL FEVER THERMOMETER** to take your pet's temperature
- **MUZZLE** to prevent bites (DO NOT muzzle your pet if he/she is 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
- **EYE DROPPER** (or large syringe without needle) to give oral treatments or flush wounds
- **K-Y JELLY** (or generic version) to protect wounds, eyes
- **MILK OF MAGNESIA OR 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 use hydrogen peroxide on wounds.)
- **SALINE SOLUTION** for cleansing wounds (Saline sold for use with contact lenses works well for most purposes.)
- **LOCATION OF PET CARRIER** (for cats and small dogs): \_\_\_\_\_

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 larger dogs, you can use a board, sled, blanket or something similar to act as a stretcher.

- Call your veterinarian or an emergency veterinary clinic so they can be ready for you when you arrive.

### IF YOUR PET'S WOUND IS BLEEDING

- Apply direct pressure with a clean towel or cloth for at least 3 minutes before checking to see if the bleeding has stopped.
- Severe bleeding can quickly be life-threatening—get your animal to a veterinarian immediately if this occurs. Add towels on top of previous layers if they are soaking through, but do not remove them as it may disturb any clot formation.

### IF YOUR PET IS BURNED

- Apply a muzzle and flush the burn with cool (not cold) water. Seek immediate veterinary care.

### IF YOUR PET HAS HEATSTROKE

- If you cannot immediately get your pet to a veterinarian, move him/her to a shaded area and out of direct sunlight.
- Place a cool or cold, wet towel around your pet's neck and head (do not cover your pet's eyes, nose or mouth). Remove the towel, wring it out, then rewet and rewrap it every few minutes.
- Pour or use a hose to keep cool water running over the animal's body (especially the abdomen and between the hind legs). Then, use your hands to sweep the water away as it absorbs the body heat.
- Transport the pet to a veterinarian as soon as possible.

### IF YOUR PET IS BITTEN BY A SNAKE

- Assume the snake is poisonous and seek veterinary attention immediately. Try to identify the snake if it can be done without risk; do not attempt to capture or kill the snake. Do not bring the snake into the veterinarian's office – a photograph will do.

For more information, visit:

[www.avma.org/firstaid](http://www.avma.org/firstaid)

**Animal Poison Control Center**

[aspca.org/pet-care/  
animal-poison-control](http://aspca.org/pet-care/animal-poison-control)



[www.avma.org](http://www.avma.org) | 800.248.3862

# PET FIRST AID

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



# ALWAYS REMEMBER

that any first aid administered to your pet should be followed by immediate veterinary care. First aid care is not a substitute for veterinary care, but it may save your pet's life until he/she receives veterinary treatment.

## FOR YOUR SAFETY

If your pet is injured, he/she is likely in pain, scared, and confused. Be careful to avoid getting hurt, bitten or scratched.

- Never assume that even the most gentle pet will not bite or scratch if injured. Pain and fear can make animals unpredictable or even dangerous.
- Don't attempt to hug an injured pet, and always keep your face away from its mouth. Although this may be your first impulse to comfort your pet, it might only scare them more or cause them pain.
- Perform any examination slowly and gently. Stop if your pet becomes more agitated.
- Drive carefully to the veterinary clinic. Panicked or out-of-control driving puts you and your pet at risk.

## IF YOUR PET IS CHOKING

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

- If your pet can still breathe, keep him/her calm and seek immediate veterinary care.
- Look into your pet's mouth to see if a foreign object is visible. If you see an object, gently try to remove it with pliers or tweezers, but be careful not to push the object further down the throat. If it's not easy to reach—don't delay; get your pet to a veterinarian immediately.
- If you can't remove the object or your pet collapses, place both hands on the side of your pet's rib cage and apply firm quick pressure, or lay your pet on his/her side and strike the rib cage firmly with the palm of your hand 3-4 times to sharply push air out of their lungs and push the object out from behind. Repeat this until the object is dislodged or until you arrive at the veterinarian's office.

## IF YOUR PET IS NOT BREATHING

- Open your pet's airway by gently grasping its tongue and pulling it forward (out of the mouth) until it is flat. Check the throat to see if there are any foreign objects blocking the airway.
- Perform rescue breathing by holding your pet's mouth closed with your hand and breathing directly into its nose until you see the chest expand. Once the chest expands, continue administering one rescue breath every 4-5 seconds.

## IF YOUR PET HAS NO HEARTBEAT

Do not begin chest compressions until you've secured an airway and started rescue breathing.

- Gently lay your pet on its right side on a firm surface. The heart is located on the left side in the lower half of the chest, just behind the elbow of the front left leg. Place one hand underneath the pet's chest for support and the other hand over the heart.
- For dogs, press down with quick, firm pressure to depress the chest one inch for medium-sized dogs. Use more force for larger animals and less force for smaller animals.
- For cats and other small pets, cradle your hand around the animal's chest so your thumb is on the left side of the chest and your fingers are on the right side of the chest, and compress the chest by squeezing it between your thumb and fingers.
- Press down 80-120 times per minute for larger animals and 100-150 times per minute for smaller ones (less than 25 lbs).
- Alternate the chest compressions with the rescue breaths: perform chest compressions for 4-5 seconds and stop long enough to give one rescue breath.
- Continue until you can hear a heartbeat and your pet is breathing regularly, or you have arrived at the veterinary clinic and they can take over the resuscitation attempts.

Please remember that your pet's likelihood of surviving with resuscitation is very low. However, in an emergency it may give your pet his/her only chance.

## IF YOUR PET IS POISONED

- If you know or suspect your pet has consumed something that may be harmful, call your veterinarian, emergency veterinary clinic or the Animal Poison Control Center (888.426.4435 – available 365 days/year, 24 hours/day; a consultation fee applies) immediately.
- If possible, have the following information available:
  - Species, breed, age, sex, weight and number of animals involved
  - Symptoms
  - Name/description of the substance that is in question; the amount the animal was exposed to; and how long it's been since your pet ate it or was exposed to it.
  - The product container/packaging available for reference.
- Collect any material your pet may have vomited or chewed, and place it in a plastic sealable bag to take with you when you bring your animal in for veterinary treatment.
- Do not try to induce vomiting or give any medication to your pet unless directed to do so by Poison Control or your veterinarian.

## IF YOUR PET IS HAVING SEIZURES

- Clear the area of other pets, furniture, and any other objects that may cause injury. Do not try to restrain your pet or startle him/her out of the seizure.
- Time the seizure (they usually last 2-3 minutes).
- After the seizure has stopped, keep your pet warm and quiet and contact your veterinarian.

## IF YOUR PET IS INJURED

- If possible and safe, try to stabilize injuries before moving an injured animal by splinting or bandaging them. Keep in mind, however, that a poorly applied bandage or splint can do more harm than good; if in doubt, leave the bandaging/splinting to professionals.
- If there is a foreign body in the wound, do not remove it. If necessary, carefully cut it short without moving it to leave 3-6 inches sticking out before transporting your pet to the veterinarian.
- While transporting your injured pet, keep him/her confined

## 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

## VETERINARY CLINIC

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

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

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

Directions from home: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## EMERGENCY CLINIC

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

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

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

Directions from home: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Animal Poison Control Center: 888-426-4435**

\*there may be a fee for the call

Non-emergency police phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Non-emergency fire department phone: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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

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