



First Aid

Hints & Tips on Medical Pet Care

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Emergency After Hours

Open 365 days

NSW

Animal Referral Hospital Homebush

250 Parramatta Road,
Homebush West, NSW 2140
Call: **02 9758 8666**
Open 24/7

Animal Referral Hospital Minchinbury

5/1 John Hines Avenue,
Minchinbury, NSW 2770
Call: **02 8610 3400**

Animal Referral Hospital Baulkham Hills

19 Old Northern Road,
Baulkham Hills, NSW 2153
Call: **02 9639 7744**

Animal Referral Hospital Gosford

Unit 3, 401 Manns Road,
West Gosford, NSW 2250
Call: **02 4323 3886**
Open 24/7

Animal Referral Hospital Wollongong

1/3 Princes Highway,
Fairy Meadow, NSW 2519
Call: **02 4283 8432**

ACT

Animal Referral Hospital Canberra

364 Fairbairn Ave,
Piailigo, ACT 2609
Call: **02 6280 6344**
Open 24/7

WA

Animal Emergency Centre Midland

227 Great Eastern Highway,
Midland, WA 6056
Call: **08 6500 3010**

VIC

Animal Emergency Centre Moorabbin

248 Wickham Road,
Highett, VIC 3190
Call: **03 9532 5261**
Open 24/7

Animal Emergency Centre Frankston

39 McMahon Road,
Frankston, VIC 3199
Call: **03 9770 5555**
Open 24/7

Animal Emergency Centre Mount Waverley

37 Blackburn Road,
Mount Waverley, VIC 3149
Call: **03 9803 8122**
Open 24/7

Veterinary Referral Hospital Dandenong

36 Lonsdale Street,
Dandenong, VIC 3175
Call: **1300 385 874**
Open 24/7

Animal Referral Hospital Essendon Fields

72 Hargrave Avenue,
Essendon Fields, VIC 3041
Call: **03 9379 0700**
Open 24/7

Centre for Animal Referral & Emergency (CARE) Collingwood

5 Hood Street,
Collingwood, VIC 3066
Call: **03 9417 6417**
Open 24/7

Greencross Vet Hospital Werribee

250 Princes Highway,
Werribee, VIC 3030
Call: **03 8721 1414**
Open 27/7

QLD

Animal Emergency Centre Woolloongabba

14 Cleveland Street,
Stones Corner, QLD 4120
Call: **07 3456 0500**
Open 24/7

Animal Emergency Centre Noosa

28 Eenie Creek Road,
Noosaville, QLD 4566
Call: **07 5353 7005**

Animal Emergency Centre Gold Coast

4/492 Scottsdale Drive,
Varsity Lakes, QLD 4227
Call: **07 5593 4544**
Open 24/7

SA

Adelaide Animal Emergency & Referral Centre

119 Anzac Highway,
Kurralt Park, SA 5037
Call: **08 8371 0333**
Open 24/7

1. Bites & Stings

A. Snake Bites

This is an **Emergency**, transport your pet to a vet immediately.

- Bites are usually inflicted on or around the head, neck and front legs
- Take note of the colour / patterns on the snake, do not attempt to catch the live snake
- Snakes are protected, killing them is illegal

Signs

- The area around the bite may swell rapidly
- Area around the bite may be very painful
- You may not see a bite mark, swelling may cause fang marks to disappear. In most cases, the bite site is never found as the teeth of snakes are very small.
- Difficulty in breathing due to narrowing or blockage of your pet's airway
- The affected pet can react in different ways. Symptoms can be:
 - Lethargic
 - Depressed
 - Pace around anxiously
 - Vomiting
 - Panting
 - Collapse straight after being bitten and then act normally for a period of time
 - Collapse, weakness or wobbliness
 - Become comatose

First Aid

- Keep your pet calm and quiet
- Apply a pressure immobilisation bandage if possible
- Carry your pet to the car, do not allow your pet to walk
- Transport your pet to a vet immediately



B. Spider Bites

Signs

- Common area to be bitten is where the fur is thin, such as between the toes and the mouth
- Pain at the site of the bite
- Can be sore to touch all over the body due to muscle cramps
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Shaking / shivering due to pain or an altered body temperature
- Convulsions
- Breathing difficulties

First Aid

- Wash the bite site
- Apply cold compress over the bite site or area of pain
- Apply an immobilisation bandage if you know where the bite site is
- See a vet promptly



C. Ticks

Ixodes Holocyclus (known as a "Paralysis Tick")

- Found on the East Coast from Northern Victoria to North Queensland and a risk to pets who live or holiday in these regions.
- Ticks may be found all year round, while in the southern area, the season begins in spring and finishes late autumn
- Ticks suck the blood of the pet and inject a toxin (poison) into the pet which causes a progressive paralysis of the muscles, including the muscles required to breathe, which can be fatal.
- The tick is carried into your backyard and through the bush by bandicoots and other native animals
- Ticks can affect cats, dogs, people and livestock

Cattle & Bush Ticks

- Can cause localised swelling and an infection at the site where they attach to the pet
- They suck blood from the pet, can make a pet anaemic or pass on some diseases, even if present in small numbers

Finding a tick

- Ticks are often found by feeling rather than seeing them
- Slowly walk your fingers through the pet's coat feeling for any lumps or scabs on the skin, cover every inch of the pet. Check in ears, around and in the mouth, around the anus, in between the toes and foot pads and under the arm pits. Remove the pet's collar as sometimes they can hide under there
- With short haired dogs, use a flea comb.
This can be an effective way of checking the pet
- Do this on a daily basis

Removing a tick

- Avoid squeezing the body when you remove it
- Gently pinch the pet's skin between your thumb and index finger to raise and isolate the tick. Using a tick hook, tips of your fingers or tweezers, get as close to the skin as possible and firmly pull the tick out of the skin
- Place the tick in a jar and take it to a vet for identification



Identification

- Body shape and colour of a tick has no significance when identifying it
- The shape of the tick's mouth part and where the legs are located are the key features when identifying a tick
- Have a qualified person (vet) identify a tick

Very Important

- Even after removing the paralysis tick, a pet can become very ill or die within the following 48–72 hours
- Even if your pet is not showing any signs or symptoms of tick poisoning, they can become very ill or die within the following 48–72 hours
- Contact a vet immediately if you find a tick or a small lump that may be a tick
- If treatment is given to reverse the effects of the tick poisoning before any signs or in the early stage of tick poisoning there is often a quicker recovery and higher survival rate for the pet
- Keep your pet cool, quiet and do not offer food or water until you have contacted a vet

Early Signs & Symptoms (Early Stage)

- In most cases, your pet will require treatment to reverse the effects of the toxin that the tick injects into your pet, even if they are only showing one of the signs listed below:
- The pet may seem quieter than usual
- Unsteadiness, wobbliness, poor coordination in the back legs
- Coughing, gagging, dry retching
- Vomiting or regurgitation of food
- Bark or meow of your pet may change
- Altered breathing pattern, requires a lot of effort to breathe

Advanced Signs (Late Stage)

- Hind quarters become paralysed, unable to stand
- Lying on the side
- Unable to swallow
- Drooling
- Moist cough, rattly chest and throat noises
- Respiratory muscles are becoming paralysed
- Difficulty in breathing, groaning noise when pet exhales
- Pale grey to blue gum colour
- Death

Prevention

- Ensure your pet is on an effective tick prevention product and do daily tick searches on your pet.
- Contact a vet to get advice on the most effective tick prevention products. The products used to kill ticks or to prevent the tick attaching to the pet can change from season to season.

D. Wasp & Bee Stings

- Can cause a mild or severe allergic reaction
- If the reaction to the sting is severe it can cause the airways to close causing the pet to asphyxiate, the sting doesn't have to be near the face to cause this to happen
- If your pet collapses or if there is any swelling around the face or throat, trouble breathing, pale gums or pain, see a vet immediately

Signs

- Bees and wasps commonly sting around the mouth, lips and sometimes on the paws
- A swelling at the site of the sting
- Drooling
- Vomiting
- Pain at the site of the sting
- Itchiness at the site of the bite or over the whole body
- Pawing at the mouth
- Difficulty breathing
- Collapse
- Bloody diarrhoea

First Aid

- Remove the sting if you can locate it
- Apply a cool face washer or wash the area with cool water
- Contact a vet for further advice



E. Ants

- Ant bites will often cause pain at the site of the bite
- You can sometimes get some swelling at the site of the bite
- Tends not to cause a severe allergic reaction

Signs

- Pet suddenly holds leg up, flicking or shaking the leg
- Sudden redness between the toes
- Licking or chewing at the site of the bite

First Aid

- Apply a cold compress to the site of the bite for 5–10 minutes
- If the bite is on the paw, place it in a cold water bath for 5–10 minutes
- Protect the area that has been bitten, the pet can cause self inflicted trauma by licking or chewing at the site of the bite. Your vet clinic can provide a collar to protect the area if the pet is causing self inflicted trauma by licking or chewing
- See a vet if the redness or itching doesn't settle down after 10–15 minutes



F. Toad Poisoning (QLD)

Toads secrete a toxin through their skin, this is absorbed through the pet's gums and tongue after contact with the toad. Pets with a small body size or cats are most at risk of the fatal effects of toad poisoning, but large dogs can be made quite sick if the toad secretes a large amount of toxin.

Signs

- Profuse salivation, drooling, frothing from mouth
- Pawing at mouth
- Vomiting
- Disorientation
- Very red and slimy gums
- Shivers and/or tremors
- Muscle rigidity or spasms
- Convulsions or fitting
- Very rapid heart rate and/or heart beat irregularities
- Death



First Aid

- Remove the toad from the pet
- Thoroughly wash the mouth out for 10–15 minutes using a slow trickling hose or tap, have the water flowing from the side of the back teeth with the water draining out through the front of the mouth, avoid water going down the throat or into the lungs
- Using a wet cloth, gently wipe the gums, tongue and roof of the mouth, rinse cloth out after each wipe, do for 10 minutes
- Transport to a vet immediately
- If the pet settles down after wiping and rinsing the mouth out, keep them confined for a few hours and monitor them closely

G. Jellyfish Stings

- Extremely painful, pain relief is often needed
- Can cause sudden cardiac and/or respiratory arrest

First Aid

- Remove the tentacles using a towel, pull cleanly and rapidly away from the skin, avoid rubbing the tentacles on the skin
- Apply a 1 part of vinegar or ammonia to 10 parts water to the affected area
- Keep your pet warm and quiet
- See a vet immediately



H. Toadfish / Pufferfish / Blue-ringed Octopus Poisoning

A Toadfish is a type of Pufferfish.

Both Toadfish and Blue-ringed Octopus contain a harmful toxin called Tetrodotoxin. This can cause:

- Abdominal discomfort / pain
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Shivering
- The pet can be quite unwell for several days
- May not eat and/or drink for several days
- Trembling
- Blue gums
- Wobbliness
- Seizures
- Respiratory distress

First Aid

Take your dog to the nearest vet immediately

2. Broken Bones

First Aid

- Place a muzzle on your pet, the pain from a broken bone can cause even the most placid dog to bite you
- Control bleeding using a pressure bandage
- Keep the pet warm
- Calm the pet
- Use a stretcher or assist the pet to walk and transport the pet to a vet immediately



3. Burns

- Damage to the surface and/or deeper layers of the skin will occur immediately regardless of the source of burn
- The visible signs of the burn can be seen immediately or it can take up to 12–24 hours after the accident depending on the cause or type of burn
- A burn is caused by a dry heat, such as, flame, corrosive chemicals, radiation, electricity or cold
- A scald is caused by a moist heat, such as, hot oil, wax or water (steam)

Signs

- Hair loss or the hair is easily plucked or falls out, singed or has a shaved look
- The skin is red
- The skin has heat radiating from it
- The skin swells and has moisture seeping from it, blisters are rarely seen
- Can be painful, it depends on the depth of tissue damage
- The tissues of a deep burn have a leathery look

A. First Aid General Guidelines (for all causes of a burn)

- Cool the area immediately with cool running water or a cool compress
- Immerse in or flush with water or apply a cool pack to the affected area for a minimum of 30 minutes
- Apply a moist, cool compress to the affected area
- Keep the pet warm by wrapping in a blanket
- Transport the pet to a vet
- In the case of a chemical burn, bring the packet of toxin in order for the vet to identify the active ingredient

B. First Aid for Chemical Burns (owner should wear gloves)

- Do not allow the pet to clean itself
- Do not rub the burnt area
- Follow basic First Aid guidelines for burns

C. First Aid for Electrical Burns

- Always ensure that the electricity has been turned off before touching the pet, it is best to do this at the mains power switch
- Follow basic First Aid guidelines for burns

4. Contaminated Coat

A. Matting of the Coat

- Matting can indicate there is a wound
- Carefully examine the area for any signs of blood, swelling or tissue injury
- If the matting is related to an injury, carefully bath the area with warm water to help lift the matt / scab, see a vet for further treatment
- If the matt is just clumped fur, apply a pet conditioner or plain moisturiser to the matt and massage it in; sometimes this helps to free the matt up so you are able to comb or brush it out
- Avoid using scissors to cut the matt out as there is a high risk of cutting the pet's skin
- Use pet clippers to clip the matt out or speak with your vet for advice

B. Paint

- Allow the paint to harden, then using pet clippers, clip the hardened paint out
- While the paint is hardening, do not allow the pet to groom itself
- Never use paint thinners or solvents as these can cause a serious chemical burn to the skin, tongue and mouth

C. Glue or Chewing Gum

- Use pet clippers to clip the matt out
- If using scissors, go carefully as there is a high risk of cutting the pet's skin

D. Insecticides

- Most insecticides are absorbed through the skin and cause an intestinal upset or in some cases liver and/or kidney dysfunction or failure or seizures
- Pets with a low body weight and young pets are most at risk of insecticide toxicity. Cats can get very sick if given dog pyrethrin-based insecticides
- Do not allow the pet to clean/groom itself until all the insecticide is removed from the coat
- It can take a few hours to days to see the signs / symptoms associated with an insecticidal toxicity, see a vet promptly

First Aid

- Contact your vet for advice. Rinse the coat well for 5-10 minute with plain tepid (not warm or hot) water
- Use a plain pet shampoo or dish washing liquid to remove the insecticidal residue

E. Oils

- Some ingredients of the oil can be absorbed through the skin and cause an intestinal upset or in some cases liver and/or kidney dysfunction or failure
- Low body weight and young pets are most at risk of oil toxicity
- Remove the oil as quickly as possible to reduce the amount that is absorbed, wash with a detergent such as dish washing liquid
- Do not allow the pet to clean/groom itself until all the oil is removed from their coat
- See a vet promptly once the oil has been removed from the coat
- Bring the bottle/container of the oil contaminant when taking your pet to the vet

Light / Thin Oils

- Using a pet shampoo or a plain dish washing detergent, rub well into the coat until the oil has gone, rinse pet well.

Heavy / Thick Oils

- Use pet clippers to clip the oil clumps out, if using scissors, go carefully as there is a high risk of cutting the pet's skin
- Use a light cooking or vegetable oil or butter, rub well into the area
- Wash the pet several times with a plain dish washing detergent until the oil has gone, rinse pet well
- May have to repeat bathing the pet for next few days

5. Convulsions

(also known as Seizures or Fitting)

First Aid

- Clear any danger away from the pet, make the room quiet and dark, wait until the convulsion has stopped before touching or moving the pet
- If unconscious, check the pet is breathing and there is no airway obstruction
- Do not place your fingers into the pet's mouth or try to restrain the pet while convulsing
- Do not attempt to give food or water while the pet is convulsing
- Reassure the pet when it comes out of the convulsion
- After the convulsion has stopped, see a vet promptly

Your pet may have shown grand mal seizure activity. These seizures are characterised by movement of the legs, reduced consciousness, +/- urination, +/- defaecation, +/- jaw movements and eye flicking. Seizures can be caused by diseases within the brain, toxins affecting brain activity or metabolic diseases such as low sugar, low calcium, liver or kidney disease.

Grand mal seizures are not life-threatening unless the animal is unlucky enough to be injured during the seizure (e.g. they fell in the pool having a seizure) or the seizures continue without return to normal consciousness for over 15 minutes. Please have your pet checked by a veterinarian immediately. Please do not try to put hands in your pet's mouth during a seizure. You are best to move things away so that your pet does not get injured. Keep a record of exactly what happens and how long the seizure lasts.

It is possible that your pet will behave a little oddly prior to the seizure and for a while afterwards (even up to 24 hours). Taking a video of your pet's behaviour can be very useful to show your Veterinarian.



6. Eye Injury

- If one eye is affected, it is often due to an injury
- If both eyes are affected it could be due to an infection or chemical burn to the eyes
- Redness, swelling, increased tear production, squinting, closing of the eye/s, cloudiness or blueness of the eyeball, discharge, change in the size of the eyeball, uneven pupil size, a membrane (third eyelid) across the eye, pawing or rubbing the eye are all signs of an eye problem
- Eye injuries or problems should be seen by a vet immediately at the time they are noticed, changes to the eye and its associated structures can occur quickly after an accident, even over a few hours

A. Prolapsed Eyeball

First Aid

- Do NOT attempt to replace the eye back into the socket
- Transport the pet to a vet immediately

B. Foreign Body

- If a foreign body has punctured the eyeball, is not mobile or is not removed by flushing, see a vet immediately
- If the foreign body is small and mobile (grass, dust etc), flush the eyeball with a gentle stream of saline or tepid water, also flush under the top and lower eyelid
- The scratching effect from a foreign body can cause small scratches on the surface of the eye, this can then turn into an ulceration on the surface of the eye and allow infection to enter
- See a vet promptly

7. Head Trauma

- Can be caused by a heavy object hitting or being dropped on to the pet's head, if the pet is accidentally dropped or if the head is hit with force by an object such as a basketball
- The pet can have permanent, life time damage if they are not treated promptly
- Any period of unconsciousness should be taken seriously

First Aid

- If convulsing, clear any danger away from the pet, wait until this stops before touching or moving the pet
- If unconscious, check the pet is breathing and there is no airway obstruction
- Keep the pet warm
- Transport pet to a vet immediately

8. Obstructions

A. Choking/Airway Obstruction

This is an **Emergency**, transport your pet to a vet immediately.

Signs

- Occurs when eating or immediately after eating and is more commonly associated with bones, raw-hide chews and chicken necks
- Standing with front legs splayed apart with head down
- If sitting, the pet will have their neck stretched out
- Mouth is open and gasping for breath
- Pet very distressed
- Chest doesn't expand, no movement of air into lungs
- Grey to blue tongue and gums
- Collapse then death
- Pawing at mouth
- Rubbing of the face (e.g. along the carpet)
- Excessive drooling
- Unpleasant breath
- Unwillingness to eat or drink

First Aid

- Try to remove the object that is causing the obstruction, being very careful not to get bitten

B. Gastrointestinal Tract Obstruction

- Can be caused from eating/ingesting cooked bones, corn cobs, string/cotton/thread, chew toys/tennis balls, avocado and peach stones, macadamia nuts or rocks.

Signs

- Lethargy
- Anorexia
- Vomiting and weight loss
- Diarrhoea
- Abdominal pain and distention
- Fever
- Dehydration
- Shock

First Aid

Consult your Veterinarian

9. Penis Protrusion

Firstly, leave your dog alone in a quiet, dark room away from other pets. If there is no improvement in 15 minutes proceed with the following:

First Aid

- Attempt to replace the penis into the sheath by:
- Apply liberally a lubricant (KY Jelly, vegetable oil) to the shaft of the penis
- Pull the sheath over the penis, don't force the penis into the sheath
- Transport to a vet if you cannot replace into the sheath
- Contact a vet to discuss the causes of a protruding penis



10. Poisonings

It can take less than 15 minutes for some poisons to be absorbed into the pets system. **Prompt veterinary attention is needed for any poisoning.**

A. Common types of poisons that pets ingest

- Human medications such as cold and flu, headache, migraine, sedative and amphetamine tablets
- Rat baits and pellets
- Snail baits and pellets
- Poison baits given in a malicious manner
- Chocolate, grapes or recreational drugs

Bring packets of anything your pet may have eaten when taking to the vet.

B. General Poisoning

Signs

- Restlessness, hyperactivity
- Panting
- Dry retching, vomiting
- Abdominal discomfort, diarrhoea
- Weakness, unable to stand, poor coordination
- Collapse, unconsciousness

C. Snail Bait Poisoning

Signs

- Incoordination
- Usually large (dilated) pupils
- Tremors progressing to convulsions
- Convulsions
- Salivation

D. Rat Bait Poisoning

Signs develop 2-7 days after ingestion

- Bruising
- Bleeding
- Lethargy
- Difficulty breathing, +/- coughing up blood
- Pale or brown-coloured gums

E. Human Medications (Aspirin & Paracetamol)

Signs

- Depression
- Vomiting (possibly blood tinged)
- Anorexia and/or lethargy
- Rapid respiratory rate
- Pale gums
- Muscle weakness
- Seizures
- Coma (death)
- Cats are more sensitive to these medications than dogs

F. Ethylene Glycol (Antifreeze Toxicity)

Signs

- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Mild to severe depression
- Ataxia and knuckling
- Increased water intake (dogs) and increased urination
- Lethargy or coma
- Seizures
- Anorexia
- Salivation

G. Lead Poisoning

Lead is found in old paints, some artist paints, lead toys and battery plates. The most common route of exposure is by ingestion.

Signs

- Vomiting
- Diarrhoea
- Anorexia
- Abdominal pain
- Lethargy
- Hysteria
- Seizures
- Blindness

H. Food Toxicity

Chocolate

Chocolate is toxic due to a component called Theobromine. Dogs are more commonly presented than cats. Dogs cannot break down and excrete Theobromine as efficiently as humans resulting in toxicity.

Signs

- Excitement/nervousness/trembling
- Vomiting/diarrhoea
- Excessive thirst and excessive urination
- Muscle spasms
- Seizures
- Coma
- Death due to cardiac arrhythmias

Garlic and Onion

- Garlic and onion can cause dose-dependent toxicity and can lead to anaemia as red blood cells are destroyed.

Signs are secondary to anaemia and include:

- Pale mucous membranes (gums)
- Elevated heart rate
- Elevated respiratory rate
- Lethargy
- Weakness
- Vomiting
- Diarrhoea
- Blood in the urine
- If your pet is exhibiting any above signs, transport them immediately to a vet.

Grapes

The toxic level of grapes varies according to the type of grape, their ripeness, and the location of where it was grown. Grapes can cause acute kidney injury which can be irreversible. Signs are not seen for days to weeks after ingestion.

Signs

- Lethargy
- Changes in thirst and urination
- Inappetance
- Vomiting and diarrhoea

First Aid

If you see the pet eating the poison but they aren't showing any above signs:

- Remove the poison
- Wash / wipe the mouth thoroughly
- Contact a vet, taking the package with you
- If you don't have the package or unsure what the pet has eaten, transport pet to the vet immediately



11. Hyperthermia

High body temperature, also known as Heat Stroke

- Usually caused by exposure to extreme heat, often when exercising, traveling or being locked in a car when it is hot or humid
- An abnormally high body temperature causes irreversible brain damage, organ damage and/or failure, the kidneys are the most effected. The blood can thicken and form a clot leading to death

Signs

- Excessive panting and salivation / slobbering
- Bright red gums and tongue which turn to blue
- Restless, distressed
- Anxious pacing, uncoordinated, stumbling
- Collapse
- Coma
- Death

First Aid

- Wash the coat with cool, not icy, water
- Put air-conditioner on high in the car
- Transport to vet immediately
- Offer water to drink, unless your dog is collapsed.
- Offer small amounts frequently so that your pet doesn't vomit it back up.



12. Wounds

- Any break in the skin, such as an abrasion, cut, puncture or penetrating wound (especially if contaminated) is susceptible to bacteria entering the wound to cause an infection
- Damage to muscles, tendons and other vital structures of the body can also occur with deep wounds
- Most wounds require a thorough flushing using sterile saline, removal of contaminating matter and devitalised (dead) tissue, surgical repair of the wound and specialised wound dressings depending on the type of wound and medication

A. Abrasions

- Graze type wound
- Affects the surface layer of the skin
- It doesn't usually go through the full thickness of the skin
- Depending on the cause it can be a large or small wound, it can be either fairly clean or contaminated with road gravel, dirt, fur and grass.

First Aid

- Flush wound gently with saline / clean tepid water (if you don't have sterile water, you can add 1 teaspoon salt to 600 mL tepid water)
- Apply a sterile / clean dressing
- See a vet promptly
- Do NOT apply Dettol or other disinfectants to wounds

B. Contaminated Wounds

- Caused usually by the pet being hit by a car or a fight with another animal
- The wounds are usually heavily contaminated with road gravel, dirt, fur and grass

First Aid

- Control bleeding by applying firm pressure
- Do not flush the wound as this will only disturb the wound and make it bleed
- After 5 minutes, apply a sterile / clean dressing over the pad or cloth that you initially used to control bleeding, removing this will disturb the wound and may cause the wound to start to bleed again
- Keep your pet warm by wrapping them in a blanket
- Be careful to avoid being bitten or scratched.
Most pets are in shock and in pain
- Due to the severity of these wounds, see a vet immediately

C. Cuts

- Shallow cuts usually only affect the full skin thickness
- Deep cuts go through the full skin thickness as well as into muscles, tendons and other vital structures of the body

First Aid

- Control bleeding by applying firm pressure
- Do not flush the wound as this will only disturb it and make it bleed. After 5 minutes, apply a sterile dressing over the pad or cloth you used to control the bleeding. Don't remove this or the wound will start to bleed again.
- See a vet promptly

D. Foreign Bodies & Penetrating Objects

- Can be caused by any protruding object such as fish hook, spear, stick or plant material and cooked bones.

First Aid

- Do not attempt to remove the item
- If possible and without causing any damage to the pet, reduce the size of the protruding part of the foreign body to 3–4 centimeters above skin level
- Control bleeding, but without applying pressure to the penetrating object
- Keep the pet warm
- Contact a vet to get more information or see a vet immediately

E. Penetrating Wound to the Chest

Signs

- A pet that has been shot or speared
- A small pet that was attacked by a larger pet with wounds on the chest area is at risk
- The chest wall collapses in when the pet breaths in
- Abnormal breathing pattern, shallow and rapid respiration rate
- Gasping or mouth breathing
- Pale gum colour or if the gums begin turning blue in colour
- Collapse
- Death

First Aid

- Do NOT remove the impaled or penetrating object
- Keep the pet warm, totally restrict any movement
- Plastic wrap such as "Glad wrap" should be wrapped around the chest, covering the wound but without putting any pressure on the impaled / penetrating object – these suggestions are to try and seal the chest area so that no further air leakage can occur into the chest and collapse the lungs
- Transport to a vet immediately

F. Puncture & Fight Wounds

- Wounds caused by teeth or claws can puncture the skin, show very little marking on the skin but tear and crush muscles, tendons and cause other internal damage to organs and other structures in the body
- Bacteria on the teeth or claws are introduced into the bitten or scratched animal
- The puncture wound heals over within a day, but the bacteria that is introduced multiplies rapidly over the next 12–48 hours and can produce a deep infection (abscess)
- A small scab and pain in the area may indicate a puncture wound

First Aid

- If you know your pet has been in a fight
- See a vet promptly. A course of antibiotics will stop a deep infection from developing
- In the case of your pet sustaining severe attack wounds
- Control bleeding
- Keep your pet warm by wrapping them in a blanket
- Avoid being bitten or scratched as most pets are in shock and in pain
- See a vet immediately



13. Checking Your Pet's Vital Signs

Normal Vital Sign Ranges	Dog	Cat
Temperature (degrees C)	37.5 – 39.2	37.7 – 39.4
Heart Rate	60 – 140	120 – 200
Respiration Rate p/min	10 – 30	20 – 30
Gum Colour & Refill Time	Pink / 1 – 2 secs	Pink / 1 – 2 secs

A. Heart Rate

Taking Your Pet's Heart Rate

- Place the palm of your hand over the left side of your pet's chest, behind the elbow, count each beat of the heart for 60 seconds, this will measure your pet's heart rate per minute
- Is there an increase or decrease in your pet's normal heart rate?
- Is there any coughing or mouth breathing?
- Does your pet have a reduced exercise tolerance, tires easily?
- Are the gums and tongue wet or dry to touch?

B. Temperature

Taking Your Pet's Temperature

- Lubricate the end of thermometer with KY Jelly
- Insert a mercury or digital thermometer 1–2 centimeters into your pet's rectum, have the bulb of the thermometer pressed gently up against the wall of the rectum, leave in for 60 – 90 seconds or until it beeps.
- Is there an increase or decrease in your pet's normal temperature?
- Does your pet feel hot or cold to touch; are the pads of the feet, ears and gums feel hot or cold?

C. Respiration Rate (Breathing)

Taking Your Pet's Respiration Rate

- Watch the rise and fall of your pet's chest, each rise and fall is counted as one respiration. Count each respiration for 60 seconds, this will measure your pet's respiration rate per minute
- Is there an increase or decrease in your pet's normal respiration rate?
- Is there an increase or decrease in the normal rise or fall of the chest when breathing?
- Is there any coughing, mouth breathing, gagging, sneezing or any discharge or blood from the nose or mouth area?
- Does your pet have a reduced exercise tolerance or tire easily?

D. Gum Colour & Refill Time

Checking Your Pet for:

- **Gum Colour** – gently lift up your pet's gums, what colour are they; bright red, pale pink, grayish white, grayish blue, white or yellow?
- **Refill Time** – gently press your finger into the gum, how long does it take for the colour to return back into the gums where it has been pressed?
- Are the gums and tongue wet or dry to touch?

Gum Colour Indicator



Healthy



Please seek veterinary advice if your pet's gum colour represents one of the above 4 shades

HEALTHY



Example of healthy pink canine gums

UNHEALTHY



Top: Pale cat gums

Bottom: Red dog gums

14. Other Ways to Assess Pet

A. Urination

- Are they urinating more frequently?
- Are they passing larger or smaller amounts?
- Is the passage of urine controlled or uncontrolled?
- Are they not passing any urine?
- Are they straining a lot with the passing of urine?
- Are they taking a longer time to urinate?
- Is the urine a normal pale, clear yellow in colour?
- Are they drinking less or more water?

B. Digestion

- How many times a day is the pet passing a stool motion, is this more frequent or less than normal?
- What consistency is the stool motion; cow pat consistency, soft and normal shape, dry, crumbly?
- What colour is the stool motion; pale cream, yellow, yellow brown, light brown, dark brown, green, black or does it have blood in it?
- Is there any flatulence?
- Has your pet vomited; how often, when does this happen, is it fluid or food that is being brought up, what colour is the fluid?

C. Breath

- Is the breath fresh to smell?
- Is there a "sweet or sugary" smell to the breath?
- Is there an "off or rotten" smell to the breath?
- Have you looked in the pet's mouth and seen any bad teeth, lumps or wounds?
- Is there any saliva or blood tinged saliva coming from the mouth?
- Does your pet eat their food without any apprehension?

D. General Demeanour

- Is your pet alert, has normal exuberance, wanting to play?
- Are they quieter than usual, wanting to sleep more or have they "slowed down" recently?
- Are they walking around without any restriction or lameness?
- Do they rise from lying down without any restriction?
- Do they show any concern when you stroke or touch them anywhere on their body?
- Are they eager to eat? Their appetite hasn't increased or decreased?
- Have they gained or lost weight, is their body weight normal for their breed?
- Do they have any lumps or bumps?

15. Important Procedures to Learn

A. Bandaging Minor Wounds

First Aid

- Flush the wound with a gentle stream of a saline solution or cool water and pat dry
- Place a pad of clean gauze or cloth over the wound, if the wound is gaping, apply damp gauze to reduce bruising and swelling. Bandage the dressing to the pet. Do not remove the dressing as this may disturb the clot. Take your pet to the vet.
- See a vet promptly as antibiotics or stitches may be necessary

B. Pressure Bandage

For heavy or spurting bleeding from a wound.

First Aid

- Do not flush the wound as this will disturb any clots and lead to further bleeding
- Place a pad of clean gauze or cloth over the wound. If the wound is gaping, apply damp gauze to reduce bruising and swelling. Do not remove the dressing as this may disturb the clot
- Apply firm pressure for 5 minutes
- Place over the original dressing, a clean gauze or cloth and strap to the pet with a bandage
- If blood seeps through the bandage, add more layers of thick gauze and bandage to the pet. Do not remove the original dressing
- See a vet immediately

C. Immobilisation of a Leg

- This may be necessary when the pet has a broken leg. It should only be used for breaks below the elbow on the front leg and the knee on the hind leg
- Stopping movement will reduce any further damage to the broken bone and surrounding nerves, muscles and tissues
- Only do this if there is no risk of being bitten

First Aid

- If there is a wound, cover this with a dry or damp pad of clean gauze or cloth, then wrap a thin bandage or small sheet over the area, this prevents the wound from becoming contaminated
- Wrap fully around the limb with a bandage, thick towel or sheet. If possible include the joint above and below the break
- Splint the limb by placing two rigid sticks or a piece of stiff cardboard folded to the shape of limb on the outside of the bandage, tape or tie splints in position then wrap the leg and splints firmly with a bandage
- See a vet immediately

D. Tourniquets

- Not recommended to be used
- For severe bleeding apply a pressure bandage to the area
- See a vet immediately

E. Stop Nails Bleeding

- Firmly press the bleeding nail into a wax candle or block of soap, the wax or soap forms a plug at the end of the nail
- Potassium Permanganate can also be used. Wet the tip of a cotton bud, dip the tip into the jar and get some of the crystals on the bud, then apply firm pressure with the tip of the bud against the bleeding nail

F. Moving a pet

- Always take care when touching and moving a sick or injured pet as even the most placid pet may bite if they are frightened, in shock or in pain
- A muzzle may be necessary
- With the pet's legs facing you, bend down, slid your arms underneath the pet. Slid one arm under and in front of the back legs and one arm under and at the back of the front legs
- Pull the pet close to your upper body, hold the pet firmly and rise bending your knees and keeping a straight back
- Maintain a steady stance, keep their head away from your face and reassure the pet
- Or you can use a stretcher or blanket to transport the pet

G. Make a Muzzle

- Use a neck tie, stocking or length of material to loop over the nose, double tie firmly over bridge of nose, loop back under the chin and then tie in bow firmly at back of head

H. Make a Stretcher

- A stretcher can be made with a rigid board or blanket
- Lay the pet on its side and slide stretcher underneath the pet or slide the pet onto the stretcher
- Lift from each end or from the edges of the board or blanket

I. Transporting your pet

- For cats and small dogs a pet carry cage is best
- For medium and large dogs a car harness is best as it restricts their movement in the car. There is a loop or clip on the harness that connects directly into the seat belt setup in the car

J. Warming your pet

- Wrap your pet in a thick blanket, jumper or layer of bubble wrap to stop the loss of body heat
- Place a heat pack wrapped in a light cloth close to the pet's body, check it's temperature and the pets regularly to avoid the pet getting over heated.
- Warm the pet slowly
- Wet pets lose body heat rapidly, so dry the pet as quickly as possible

K. Cooling your pet

- Soak a towel in cool water, drizzle the water over pet, concentrating on the head, around chest, stomach, under the neck, inner thighs and the paw pads.
- Wrap the pet in a cool, wet towel
- For larger pets, gentle hosing or bathing with cool water is recommended followed by damp towels applied to the head and stomach
- Cool the pet slowly
- Do NOT apply ice packs to the pet
- Once the pet's temperature comes down to 39 degrees C, stop cooling the pet and wrap in a dry towel or blanket

L. Washing your pet

- When washing your pet, use a shampoo that has been specially formulated for the type of pet you have
- Human shampoos, conditioners and other hair products can cause imbalances in the pet's pH and oil levels in the skin and coat. This can lead to skin reactions, itchiness and dryness.
- Human shampoos, conditioners and other hair products can be toxic to a pet
- Laundry detergents and softeners, such as wool mix should never be used to bath a pet

M. Artificial Resuscitation

- If a pet stops breathing for 3–5 minutes there is a very poor chance of survival, massive brain damage has occurred
- For small pets, cover the pet's mouth and nose with your mouth and blow
- For larger pets, cover the pet's nose with your mouth while holding their mouth closed to reduce air escaping and blow
- Lay the pet on their right hand side
- Check firstly for any obstructions in the mouth or throat
- Gently pull the tongue out of the mouth as far as it will comfortably go
- Gently hold the pet's mouth closed without hurting the tongue
- Cup your hands around the nose
- Gently blow into the nostrils and/or mouth until the chest rises, adjust the strength and volume of your blowing for the size of the pet
- Blow every 3–5 seconds for the first minute, check the pet after a minute to see if breathing has restarted and if there is a heart beat
- Continue a breath every 5 seconds, regularly check the pet for breathing and a heart beat
- Transport to a vet immediately, if you have a driver continue artificial respiration while in transit

N. Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (Heart Massage)

For Small Pets

- Lay the pet on their right hand side
- The head and neck should be gently extended straight
- Place your left hand on the pet's back line above the shoulder area, this is for support and to stop them from sliding away
- With the fingers of your right hand, these are placed under the pet with your palm resting on the pet's sternum, your thumb is placed over where the heart is situated
- The thumb is used to squeeze the chest wall over the heart to stimulate cardiac activity
- Aim for 100 compressions per minute
- Regularly check the pet for a heart beat

For Large Pets

- Lay the pet on their right hand side
- The head and neck should be gently extended straight
- Place both hands over the highest part of the chest and using the "heel" of your hands, press down compressing your dog's chest.
- Aim for 100 compressions per minute.
- Check for a heart beat every 1-2 minutes
- Transport to a vet immediately, if you have a driver continue CPR while in transit.

O. Heimlich Manoeuvre

Used for when the pet is choking

First Aid

1. Raise your pet onto its hind legs, the hind feet can rest on the floor or you can lift the pet off the ground, depending on their body weight
2. Place the dog's back line against your front, for larger dogs you may have to lower your body position, the pet's spine should be supported against your front at all times
3. Your arms are placed around the pet just under the ribs, where the ribs finish and the abdomen starts
4. Squeeze the pet firmly up and forward
5. Repeat 4 times

OR

1. Hold the pet upside down by its back legs, suspend in the air
2. Firmly deliver a blow using your hand to the abdomen of the pet, in the area of where the ribs finish and the abdomen starts
3. Repeat 4 times

Animal Referral & Emergency Network

