

First Aid for Pets

Basic Supplies:

Gauze pads, gauze roll/ bandages, roll of cloth, thermometer, tweezers, hydrogen peroxide, antibiotic ointment, Q-tips, instant cold pack, rags/ rubber tubing for tourniquet, First Aid book

Handling an Injured Animal

Any animal injured or in pain can bite or scratch you. Even the friendliest of pets must be handled with care for the safety, of all involved. If you are accidentally bitten or scratched, seek medical attention. Both dog and cat bites can become infected quickly!

CATS AND DOGS

Vital Statistics: Pulse and Heart Rate

Normal resting rates:

- Cats: 150-200 bpm
- Small dogs: 90-120 bpm
- Medium dogs: 70-110 bpm
- Large dogs: 60-90 bpm

Pulse should be strong, regular and easy to locate.

Checking the pulse

The easiest place to locate a pulse is the femoral artery in the groin area. Place your fingers on the inside of the hind leg and slide your hand upward until the back of your fingers touches the abdomen. Gently move your fingers back and forth on the inside of the hind leg until you feel the pulsing blood. Count the number of pulses in 15 seconds and multiply that number by 4. This will give you the beats per minute (bpm).

Temperature

Normal temp. for dogs and cats: 100-102.5 degrees

Thermometer should be almost clean when removed.

Abnormalities are indicated by blood, diarrhea, or black, tarry stool.

Basic First Aid Procedures

All of the following situations require immediate veterinary care.

1. Fractures

- Muzzle animal.
- Gently lay animal on a board, wooden door, tarp, etc. padded with blankets.
- Secure animal to the support.
- Do not attempt to set the fracture.
- If a limb is broken, wrap the leg in cotton padding, then wrap with a magazine, rolled newspaper, towel or two sticks. Splint should extend one joint above the fracture and one joint below. Secure with tape. Make sure wrap does not constrict blood flow.
- If the spine, ribs, hip, etc. appears injured or broken, gently place the animal on the stretcher and immobilize it if possible.

2. Bleeding (external)

- Muzzle animal.
- Press thick gauze pad over wound. Hold firmly until clotting occurs.
- If bleeding is severe, apply a tourniquet between the wound and the heart.
- Loosen tourniquet for 20 seconds every 15-20 minutes.
- A tourniquet is dangerous and should only be used in life-threatening hemorrhaging of a limb. It may result in amputation or disability of the limb.

3. **Bleeding (internal)**
 - Symptoms: bleeding from nose, mouth, rectum; coughing blood; blood in urine; pale gums; collapse; rapid or weak pulse.
 - Keep animal as warm and quiet as possible.
4. **Burns**
 - Chemical
 - Muzzle animal.
 - Flush immediately with large quantities of cold water.
 - Severe
 - Muzzle animal.
 - Quickly apply ice water compresses.
 - Treat for shock if necessary.
5. **Shock**
 - Symptoms: weak pulse; shallow breathing; nervousness; dazed appearance.
 - Often accompanies severe injury or extreme fright.
 - Keep animal restrained, quiet and warm.
 - If unconscious, keep head level with rest of body.

Restraint Methods

If your animal is injured, you must restrain him/her for your safety as well as your pet's. Muzzle your pet to restrain it unless it is unconscious, has difficulty breathing or has a mouth injury.

Dogs--Muzzles

1. Speak and move calmly and quietly.
2. Have someone restrain the dog with a leash.
3. Approach dog from the side and behind its head; do not attempt to put muzzle on from the front.
4. Quickly slip a nylon or wire cage muzzle over nose, secure snugly behind ears.
5. If a muzzle is not available, you can make one from a strip of gauze, rag, necktie, belt or rope about 3 feet long.
 - Make a large loop in the center. Quickly slip loop over dog's nose.
 - Bring ends under chin. Tie snugly behind ears.

Cats--Muzzles

1. Speak and move calmly and quietly.
2. Have someone restrain the cat by holding the scruff of its neck firmly. This does not hurt the cat; it just prevents him/her from moving.
3. Working from behind the cat, quickly slip a nylon muzzle over the cat's face. The muzzle will cover most of his/her face, including the eyes. Secure snugly behind head.
4. If you are alone, scruff the cat with one hand and put the muzzle over the cat's face with the other. Slide both hands along muzzle straps and secure behind the head.
5. If a muzzle is not available, one can be made with a rag or a strip of gauze. Make sure that it is carefully placed around the cat's mouth and securely fastened, as cats can escape from these temporary muzzles.

Cats--Body Restraint

1. Most cats can be restrained by holding the scruff of the neck.
2. The "Cat Sack" can be used for fractious or very frightened cats. Slip sack over cat from tail to head, zip up appropriate zippers.
3. Wrap cat in a towel, making sure his/her front legs are covered and against the body.
4. Gloves are not recommended for handling cats. They reduce the handler's dexterity and can easily be penetrated by a cat's teeth.

BIRDS

Basic First Aid Procedures

All of the following situations require immediate veterinary care.

1. **Fractures**
 - Wing
 - Restrain bird by wrapping in a towel or slipping into a sock with the toe cut out.
 - Leg
 - Restrain bird by wrapping in a towel or sock, leaving leg exposed.
 - Splint leg with 2 pieces of adhesive tape placed perpendicular to leg across break site.
2. **Bleeding**
 - Broken "blood" feather (new feather)
 - Pull feather out gently; bleeding should decrease.
 - Press finger over removal site until bleeding stops.
 - Wound or broken nail
 - Apply pressure to site with finger(s). Bleeding should decrease.
 - Apply "Quick Stop" powder or styptic to stop bleeding.
 - Flour or cornstarch can be used in an emergency.
3. **Puncture Wounds**
 - Wrap bird in towel or sock.
 - See veterinarian: antibiotics are required to prevent infections.

Restraint

1. Carefully wrap bird in towel, gently folding his/her wings against the body. Keep your hands out of the way of the beak.
2. Gloves are not recommended for bigger birds. They reduce the handler's dexterity and strong beaks can easily penetrate them.

SMALL MAMMALS AND REPTILES

Restraint

1. Wrap the animal in a towel or rag, gently folding his/her legs against the body.

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