

Pet First Aid Kit

Everyone who owns a dog or cat should have a basic first aid kit. Always put your kit back in the same place so you know where it is when you need it.

If you go places with your pet, you should also have a first aid kit in your car!

When something happens to your pet (or to the people you love), the first thing we usually do is PANIC. The first step to dealing with ANY emergency is to **STAY CALM**. Identify and assess the problem. If you have a plan, you'll be able to think more clearly.

The first action is always the hardest to remember, so the first thing you should always do is GRAB THE FIRST AID KIT. The few seconds it takes for you to go get your first aid kit will allow you to decompress, breathe and be able to think more clearly so you can focus on what you need to do to help your pet.

Below is a list of basic supplies that should be in every pet first aid kit. These items are meant to treat MINOR injuries. Serious injuries need immediate veterinary attention. When in doubt, CALL YOUR VETERINARIAN OR GET YOUR PET TO AN ANIMAL HOSPITAL

Always know the location and phone number of the closest 24-hour Emergency Animal Hospital. Program it into your mobile phone. Write it down and put it in your first aid kit.

It's also worth mentioning that whenever you travel with your pet, even for day trips, you should know the address and phone number of the closest 24-hour Emergency Animal Hospital.

When you call your vet because your pet is sick or injured, you should be prepared to give as much information as possible. If your pet is injured, tell your vet exactly what happened and when. Describe injuries in detail and explain the care you've given. If your pet is sick, the more information you can provide, the quicker your vet can figure out what's wrong. Let's say your pet is lethargic. What will your vet need to know?

- How old is your pet?
- When did you first notice signs that your pet was acting different?
- How long has it been going on?
- What signs and symptoms are present? Be as specific as possible. When was the last time he ate? If your pet has been vomiting, what color is the vomit? Is it foamy or watery?
- Does he have a fever? This is where the thermometer and Vaseline comes in (*see Canine First Aid Kit Supplies*).



Pet First Aid Kit Supplies

A List of Supplies Every Pet Owner Should Have

A Container

You'll need something to keep all of your supplies in. A toolbox is a great option because it's large enough to hold everything and you can store it somewhere out of the way.

Nitrile Gloves

If your dog is injured, you don't want to introduce more bacteria.

Saline Wound Wash

If a cut is deeper than 1/4" deep, it will require sutures. You don't want to disinfect a wound that's 1/4" or deeper. Simply rinse it with **saline wound wash**, cover it to keep it clean *and seek veterinary attention*.

Cotton Balls and Cotton Swabs

Use cotton balls to clean the wound. If the wound is small you can use a cotton swab. You can also use the cotton swab to apply triple antibiotic ointment.

Chlorhexidine Solution 2%

Used to disinfect superficial cuts, minor burns, abrasions, insect bites and stings. Safe for dogs, cats and horses. Apply Chlorhexidine Flush 0.2% liberally to the affected area. Use cotton or absorbent material to clean the excess solution and cover immediately. Do not allow the animal to lick the treated area until dry.

NOTE: Rubbing alcohol and hydrogen peroxide should never be used to disinfect a wound. Both alcohol and peroxide can cause harm to the tissue and delay healing.

Triple Antibiotic Ointment

Apply a THIN LAYER over the wound. You don't want to put too much – you want to allow oxygen to get to the wound to promote healing. Don't let your pet lick the ointment for at least 15 minutes! It's best to cover the wound after applying the ointment. Apply twice a day, changing the bandage every time you apply the ointment. If redness or swelling should occur, discontinue use and contact your veterinarian. If the wound doesn't heal after four to seven days, or appears worse, take your dog to your veterinarian. *Never use this ointment in your dog's eyes*. For serious wounds or punctures, you can apply the antibiotic ointment to seal the wound while you are enroute to your veterinarian or an animal hospital.

Gauze Pads – 2x2, 4x4 & 5x9

Use gauze pads to apply pressure to bleeding wounds or to dress wounds.

If bleeding is severe, hold pressure until bleeding stops and don't lift the gauze to "look" as this will disrupt the clot that is forming. If blood soaks through the first gauze pad, don't remove it. Put more **gauze** on top of it and continue to apply pressure. This can take quite a few minutes so be patient!

Once the bleeding has stopped, apply a self-adhering cohesive bandage to hold the dressing in place

Note: Bleeding stops when the blood coming out of the wound clots or *coagulates*. Clotting happens as tiny particles in the bloodstream called *platelets* interact with proteins. The proteins trigger the platelets to become sticky and fibrous. Platelets stick together across the opening in the blood vessel (the wound) and plug the hole, providing a foundation for new tissue to grow.

Self-Adhering Cohesive Bandage Rolls

Self-adhering cohesive bandage are used to hold dressings (gauze) in place. Make sure not to wrap it too tight! It should be tight enough to apply gentle pressure and hold the dressing in place, but not inhibit circulation.

Round Tipped Scissors

You may need to cut the fur around a wound or cut a piece of dressing or bandage. Pets have a tendency to move, so always use round tipped scissors! When using scissors near your pet, always cut ABOVE your fingers, not between your pet and your fingers.

Saline Eye Wash

If your dog gets debris such as sand in his eyes, or has a run-in with a skunk, you may need to flush his eyes with a product such as *Vetericyn Plus Eye Wash* which is safe for all animals.

Antihistamine Tablets

NEVER administer ANY people medications without first speaking to a veterinarian, even if you've given it to your dog in the past. Have them in your first aid kit to administer as directed by your veterinarian.

Tick Tool

A tick tool such as the *Tick Tornado Tick Removal Tool* is a MUST for any pet owner. Tweezers tend to squeeze the tick and separate the tick's body from it's head risking infection (YUCK). The Tick Tornado allows you to remove the tick by TWISTING than pulling without compressing the tick.

Tweezers

Tweezers should never be used to remove ticks or bee stingers! Use tweezers to remove wood splinters or thorns.

Note: Bee stingers should be removed immediately to prevent more venom from being released into the body. To safely remove a stinger, spread the skin between your thumb and forefinger and gently scrape the skin with your fingernail or a credit card until the stinger comes out. Apply Chlorhexadine, saline or wash the affected are with soap and water. If you have an old credit card or driver's license, you may want to put it in your first aid kit.

A Towel

A towel can be used to control severe bleeding while enroute to your veterinarian or animal hospital or can help you to move your pet if he's unable to move on his own.

A Muzzle

A frightened, injured animal will instinctively try to protect themselves. Even the sweetest puppy can snarl or snap at the person they love the most when they're hurt! A muzzle will ensure your pet's safety, your safety and the safety of others trying to help.

Note: No dog likes a muzzle. When you muzzle your dog, it causes stress which causes the heart rate to increase. If your pet is injured, you want to REDUCE his stress. You should desensitize your dog to the muzzle BEFORE you need to use it. When you're home with your dog, put the muzzle on, take it off after a few seconds and give him a treat. Do this often until the muzzle is no big deal. In the event your dog is badly injured and needs to be muzzled, he'll be used to it.

A Thermometer and Vaseline

Normal body temperature for dogs and cats is 101.0°F to 102.5°F. Different factors may cause the temperature to be a little above or a little below average, but if your pet's temperature rises above 103°F or falls below 99°F, take your pet to your veterinarian.