

First Aid Kit for Pets
courtesy of Okanagan Veterinary Hospital
3355 Sexsmith Road
Kelowna, BC V1X 7T5
(250) 765-5132

FIRST AID CARE FOR PETS

A. POISONINGS

What to look for:

Sudden onset vomiting, depression, profuse salivation, convulsions, seizures, spontaneous bleeding, severe lethargy or listlessness.


What to do:

- If you suspect or observe ingestion of, or exposure to, a toxin, CALL YOUR VETERINARIAN IMMEDIATELY. Find out what the product is, when the poisoning might have occurred, and how much was ingested. Save any packages you find.
- If the animal is excited or convulsing, PROTECT YOURSELF AND THE PET FROM INJURY.
- For poisonings resulting from recent ingestion (within 2 hours) induce vomiting:
 1. Hydrogen peroxide--give 1 tsp per 5 kg body weight, repeat in several minutes if no response. (or 5mL every 5 minutes)
 2. Table salt--put 1 full tsp into the mouth on the back of the tongue.
 3. Syrup of ipecac--give 1-2 ml per kg body weight to a maximum of 15 mL (50% effective)

Save the vomitus for analysis (legal implications).

NOTE: Do not induce vomiting if petroleum products, cleaning products such as bleach or other strong alkali or acid products have been ingested.

For skin contact with toxic substances:

1. Wash the skin with large volumes of warm water as soon as possible.
 2. Avoid getting toxic products near the eyes and mouth.
 3. Oil products--dilute with vegetable oil first.
 4. Skunk spraying--use baking soda/vinegar/detergent mixture
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COMMON POISONS

1. Antifreeze
2. Organophosphates (Pesticides)
3. Rat Poisons
4. Strychnine
5. Acetaminophen (Tylenol)
6. Salicylate (ASA)
7. Chocolate (theobromine)
8. Fertilizers
9. Recreational Drugs
10. Fuel Oil/Gas
11. Plants
12. Onion Poisoning
13. Slugbait

B. SHOCK

What is Shock:

Shock is a life-threatening condition caused by lack of effective circulation.

Causes of Shock:

Traumatic injury, hemorrhage, burns, prolonged vomiting/diarrhea, heart failure, stings, blocked air passages (lack of oxygen), electrocution.

Signs of Shock:

1. Pale or muddy gums.
2. Poor capillary refill time (press on the gums for a prolonged period, then release--the colour should return within 1-2 seconds).
3. Rapid and weak pulse.
4. Decreased body temperature (normal is 38.0-39.0 Celsius).
5. Weakness, depression (may be restless or anxious in early shock).

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First Aid Treatment for Shock:

1. Immediate care to stop hemorrhage and ensure adequate breathing.
2. Cover the animal to reduce continued loss of body heat.
3. Immobilize--do not encourage an affected animal to walk or move on its own.

C. SEVERE BLEEDING

Methods to Stop External Bleeding:

1. Apply direct pressure with a compress over the bleeding area. Use a bare hand or finger if compresses are not available. The compress can be bound in place. Do not disturb blood clots on the compress. If blood soaks through, add another compress.
2. Elevation can be used in conjunction with compresses if a paw or leg is severely bleeding. Elevate the limb above the heart.
3. Apply pressure to the supplying artery while continuing to apply direct pressure to the bleeding site. For rear leg bleeding, put pressure over the femoral artery and for front leg bleeding, apply pressure over the brachial artery (DEMONSTRATION DURING CLASS)
4. Apply pressure below the wound to control venous blood flow and apply pressure above the site to control arterial bleeding.
5. Tourniquet application should be reserved for life-threatening bleeding in a limb not expected to be saved. A wide piece of cloth should be used.

D. WOUNDS

Types of Wounds:

Abrasions, lacerations, punctures, bite wounds etc.

First Aid for Wounds:

1. Stop bleeding
2. Protect from further contamination and dehydration by applying moist compresses.
3. Immobilize the wound to prevent further damage, bleeding and pain.
4. Treatment of shock if required.

Serious wounds with bleeding:

- do not remove the initial compress
- do not attempt to clean the wound
- immobilize the area

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Superficial wounds without bleeding:

- muzzle the animal if required
- clean the wound thoroughly using warm water
- use appropriate cleansers that have been diluted following label instructions
Hibitane skin cleanser (chlorhexidine)
Povidone iodine (Betadine)
Hydrogen peroxide (*only if suturing is not necessary*)
- rinse thoroughly after application of cleansers
- blot dry and apply a sterile gauze pad or clean cloth

NOTE: Cat bites and scratches are particularly prone to infection and are likely to result in abscess formation. Antibiotics are usually required.

E. BURNS

First Aid Treatment for all Burns:

1. Apply cool to cold wet compresses for at least 30 minutes or hold under running tap..
2. Change compresses frequently to ensure they are always cool.
3. SEEK VETERINARY HELP IMMEDIATELY.

F. ALLERGIC REACTIONS

Allergic reactions occur with insect bites, medications, and some foods. The reactions range from:

- shock
- edema of the larynx
- local swelling at the site of the sting:
 - apply antihistamine cream
 - apply cool compresses
 - try baking soda and water paste or diluted ammonia
 - may see vomiting
- hives (urticaria), especially ears and muzzle

If the animal is uncomfortable or has difficulty breathing seek veterinary attention IMMEDIATELY

NOTE: Itchy skin can be suggestive of parasites (fleas), a contact allergy, a food allergy or an allergy to something inhaled (atopic).

G. INABILITY TO URINATE

SEE HANDOUTS ON BLOCKED CATS--A TRUE EMERGENCY

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H. VOMITING/DIARRHEA

Management:

If your pet is vomiting withhold food, but not water, for 12 hours. If the vomiting still persists seek medical advice. If the animal has diarrhea, but no vomiting, the animal can be fed. If diarrhea persists for more than 24 hours or the animal seems depressed seek veterinary care. Very old and very young pets are particularly susceptible to salt and water losses and should be checked by your veterinarian.

I. FOREIGN BODIES

Stones, bones, fish hooks, pine cones, socks, underwear and toys can cause blockages or damage to the esophagus, stomach or intestines. SEEK MEDICAL ADVICE

J. EYE PROBLEMS

Consider all eye problems emergencies and have them assessed as soon as possible. SEEK MEDICAL ADVICE

K. BLOAT

Definition of Bloat:

A life-threatening disease in which the stomach dilates and may twist. Most commonly seen in deep-chested large breed dogs.

Signs of Bloat:

Drooling saliva, retching or attempting to vomit, anxiety, restlessness, pacing, bloated appearance. Finally, depression and shock.

IMMEDIATE VETERINARY ATTENTION IS REQUIRED

L. TICKS

Ticks on dogs are not usually a problem. They should be gently pulled off. Check the tick to see if the head is still attached (if it is, the legs will probably be moving). Lyme disease does not seem to be a serious problem in the Interior of BC. Do not panic if the head stays in. Ticks without their heads are as dead as we are without ours.

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M. PREVENTATIVE MEDICINE

Make sure your pet has a checkup every year. In older pets (dogs over 8 years old) consider an annual blood test. Deworm your pet regularly and give your dog heartworm medication during the summer (June – October) in the Okanagan. Other than that the keys to a long and healthy life are good food and healthy teeth.

Dental disease is often overlooked in pets, so check your dogs teeth regularly. Pay particular attention to the upper rear molars; that is where most of the problems start.

N. VACCINATIONS

Pets can be vaccinated for various diseases. At this moment we distinguish between “core” and “non-core” vaccinations.

Core vaccinations are shots that every animal should receive; Distemper, Parvo, Adenovirus

Non core vaccinations are “optional” and depend on the animal’s lifestyle: Rabies, Kennel cough, Leptospirosis, Corona, Lyme, Giardia etc.

All veterinarians agree that vaccines are a very effective way to prevent infectious diseases in our pets, but the frequency at which the various vaccines need to be given is the subject of heated discussions among veterinarians. At this moment the recommendations range from 1x per year to 1x in a life time.

At this moment I still recommend yearly vaccinations, until more definite studies are published.

In stead of revaccinating your pet annually it is possible to measure antibody levels against a number of diseases in a blood sample. This is called a “titer-test”.

CARDIOPULMONARY RESUSCITATION (CPR)

Definition of Cardiopulmonary Arrest

Sudden cessation of heart and lung function (the pumping of blood and air exchange)

Reasons for Cardiopulmonary Arrest

- obstructed airway--foreign object, swelling from corrosive products/allergic reactions
- drowning
- suffocating
- trauma to head, chest, or abdomen causing difficult breathing
- heart failure
- electrocution
- other

THE ABC's of CPR

A--AIRWAY
B--BREATHING
C--CIRCULATION

1. Is the animal unconscious?
 - -talk, touch and assess
 - -YOUR SAFETY IS PARAMOUNT
 - -is the animal alive?
 - -touch the surface of the eye (cornea) and see if the animal blinks
2. Ensure the animal's airway is open.
 - -extend the head and neck
 - -pull the tongue forward (wipe out saliva and vomit)
 - -push on chest -> should hear/feel air come out
 - -can test by blowing into nostrils/mouth
3. Is the animal breathing?
 - -observe for breathing for 10 seconds, look at the chest and the abdomen
 - -if none, start artificial respiration

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4. Initiate artificial ventilation (AV).

- -cover the animal's nose with your mouth and breathe forcibly into its nostrils
 - a. Small dog/cat--hold the corners of the mouth closed so air doesn't leak out
 - b. Large/medium dog--pull the tongue forward, hold the mouth and lips closed using both hands cupped around the muzzle
- -force air into the chest, allow air to be passively exhaled
- -give 4-5 short breaths and then reassess
- -if still not breathing, continue AV

Rate: 20-25 breaths per minute

5. Check for a pulse once AV has been initiated.

- -feel the chest for a heart beat
- -feel for a femoral pulse
- -if none, then begin chest compressions
 - a. Small dog/cat
 - squeeze the chest with forefinger and thumb of your dominant hand at the widest part of the ribcage or within 1" of the elbow. Depress 1-1.5 inches
 - b. Large/medium dog
 - lay the dog on its back and compress over the sternum. Depress 1-3 inches

Rate: 80-100 compressions per minute

6. Give 3 compressions then follow with 1 compression and 1 breath simultaneously
7. Seek veterinary attention immediately.

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Practical Exercises:

1. Review first aid kit
2. Restraining animals
3. Lifting animals
4. Muzzles
5. Pulse/heart rate, capillary refill time
6. Ear clean
7. Nail trim
8. Bandaging - ear, tail, paw
9. Stretcher use
10. Bleeding nails, nose
11. Artery sites, vein sites
12. Immobilize limbs
13. How to tell if an animal is dead
14. CPR

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PET FIRST AID EQUIPMENT

1. Adhesive tape (1" width) - for bandaging but also can be used as a muzzle
2. Sterile dressing pads (3") (can substitute sanitary napkins)
3. Roll of cotton wool (or a clean cloth for padding)
4. Cling gauze
5. Gauze sponges (2") - for cleaning wounds
6. Elastoplast/Vetwrap
7. Magazine or newspaper - can act as splint (tape on arm)
8. Thermometer (normal rectal temperature is 38.5-39.5 C)
9. Scissors - for cutting bandage material
10. Antiseptic soap/solution
- hibitane skin cleanser (chlorhexidine)
11. Antibiotic cream or ointment (eg. Polysporin)
12. Eye wash (sterile saline in a squirt bottle). If nothing else available use contact lens fluid.
13. Hydrogen peroxide 3% (to induce vomiting)
- give 1 teaspoon for each 5 kg body weight
14. Plastic collar to prevent biting/rubbing of eyes or wounds - available at your veterinarian
15. Blanket - for carrying animals (like a hammock)
16. Rope leash
17. Medications specifically required by your pet

VETERINARIAN'S OFFICE NUMBER _____

VETERINARIAN'S EMERGENCY NUMBER _____

If you have any questions, call Okanagan Veterinary Hospital at 765-5132

Pet Poison Safety Tips

*Please follow these guidelines to protect your
Pets from being exposed.*

- Be aware of the plants you have in your home and yard. The ingestion of azalea, oleander, sago palm, or yew plant material by an animal can be fatal. Easter lily, day lily, tiger lily, and some other lily species can cause kidney failure in cats.
- Never allow your pets to have access to the areas in which cleaning agents are being used or stored. Cleaning agents have a variety of properties; some may only cause mild stomach upset, but others can cause severe burns of the tongue, mouth and stomach.
- When using rat, mouse, snail or slug baits, or ant or roach traps, place the products in areas that are inaccessible to your companion animals. Some bait contains sweet smelling inert ingredients, such as jelly, peanut butter or sugar that can attract your pets.
- Never give your companion animals medication unless you are directed to do so by a veterinarian. Many medications that are safe for humans can be deadly for animals. For example, one 500mg-acetaminophen tablet could be lethal to an average sized cat.
- Keep all prescription and over-the-counter drugs out of your pets' reach, preferably in closed cabinets. Pain killers, cold medicines, anti-cancer drugs, antidepressants, vitamins and diet pills are all examples of human medications that can be lethal to animals, even in small doses. For example, one 200mg-ibuprofen tablet could cause stomach ulcers in a dog weighing 10 pounds.
- Never leave chocolate unattended. Preferably take it to your nearest veterinarian.
- Many common household items can be lethal to animals. Mothballs, potpourri oils, coffee grounds, homemade play dough, fabric softener sheets, dishwashing detergent, batteries, cigarettes, alcoholic drinks, pennies, and hand and foot warmers could be dangerous for your pet.
- Automotive products such as gasoline, oil and antifreeze should be stored in areas that are inaccessible to your pets. As little as one teaspoon of antifreeze can be deadly to a cat weighing seven pounds; less than one tablespoon can be lethal to a dog weighing 20 pounds.
- Before buying a flea product for use on your pets, ask your veterinarian for a recommendation.
- Read all of the information on the label before using a product on your pet or in your home. Always follow the directions.
- If a product is for use only on dogs, it should never be used on cats; if a product is for use only on cats, it should never be used on dogs.
- Make sure your pets do not enter areas in which foggers or house sprays have been used for the period of time indicated on the label. Birds are more sensitive to inhalants. Always check with your veterinarian before using any spray product in your home if you own pet birds.
- Make sure your pets do not go on lawns or in gardens treated with fertilizers, herbicides or insecticides until they have dried completely. Always store such products in areas that are inaccessible to your pets.

WINTER HOLIDAY HAZARDS FOR PETS

Here are some tips for keeping your pets out of danger during the holiday season.

AVOID Holiday Food Items That Could Cause Problems For Your Pet:

- Alcoholic beverages
- Chocolate (baker's, semi-sweet, milk chocolate)
- Coffee (grounds, beans, chocolate covered espresso beans)
- Moldy or spoiled foods
- Onions, onion powder
- Fatty foods
- Salt
- Yeast dough

PLANTS:

Lilies that may be found in holiday flower arrangements could be deadly to your cat. Many types of lily, such as Tiger, Asian, Japanese Show, Easter, Stargazer, and the Casa Blanca, can cause kidney failure in cats.

Poinsettias are generally over-rated in toxicity. If ingested, poinsettias can be irritating to the mouth and stomach, and may cause mild vomiting or nausea.

Mistletoe has the potential to cause cardiovascular problems. However, mistletoe ingestion usually only causes gastrointestinal upset.

Holly ingestion could cause vomiting, nausea, diarrhea, and lethargy.

HAZARDS AROUND THE CHRISTMAS TREE :

Christmas tree water may contain fertilizers, which, if ingested, can cause stomach upset.

Stagnant tree water can be breeding grounds for bacteria, which can also lead to vomiting, nausea, and diarrhea, if ingested.

Electric cords- Avoid animal exposure to electric cords. If they were chewed, they could electrocute your pet. Cover up or hide electric cords, never let your pet chew on them.

Ribbons or tinsel can get caught up in the intestines and cause intestinal obstruction.

Batteries contain corrosives. If ingested they can cause ulceration to the mouth, tongue, and the rest of the gastrointestinal tract.

Glass ornaments can cut the tissues of the gastrointestinal tract if ingested.

MEDICATIONS:

Keep all prescriptions and over-the-counter drugs out of the reach of your pets, preferably in closed cabinets. Pain killers, cold medicines, anti-cancer, drugs, antidepressants, vitamins, and diet pills are common examples of human medication that could be potentially lethal even in small dosages. One regular-strength ibuprofen tablet (200mg) can cause stomach ulcers in a 10-pound dog. Remind holiday guests to store their medications safely as well.

During the holidays, many veterinary clinics have limited office hours. In some cases, pet owners try to medicate their animals without their veterinarian's advice. Never give your animal any medications unless under the directions of veterinarian. Many medications that are used safely in humans can be deadly when used inappropriately. Less than one regular strength acetaminophen tablet (325mg) can be dangerous to a cat weighing 7lbs.

OTHER WINTER HAZARDS:

Antifreeze has a pleasant taste. Unfortunately, very small amounts can be lethal. As little as one teaspoon of antifreeze can be deadly to a cat; less than four teaspoons can be dangerous to a 10-pound dog. Thoroughly clean up any spills, store antifreeze in tightly closed containers and store in secured cabinets. Automotive products such as gasoline, oil and antifreeze should be stored in areas that are inaccessible to your pets. Propylene glycol is a safer form of antifreeze. Low Tox™ brand antifreeze contains propylene glycol and is recommended to use in pet households.

If you think your pet has consumed antifreeze, contact your veterinarian right away! If you are unable to reach a veterinarian give your dog Vodka at a dose of 2.5 ml per kg bodyweight. The alcohol in the Vodka works as an antidote.

Liquid potpourris are popular household fragrances commonly used during the holiday season. Pets are often exposed to liquid potpourri by direct ingestion from simmer pots or spills, or by rubbing against leaky bottles or simmer pots containing the potpourri, or from spilling the containers upon themselves. Oral exposures result following grooming. Exposure of pets to some types of liquid potpourris can result in severe oral, dermal and ocular damage.

Ice melting products can be irritating to skin and mouth. Depending on the actual ingredient of the ice melt and the quantity, signs of ingestion would include excessive drooling, depression, vomiting or even electrolyte imbalances.

Rat and mouse killers are used more commonly during colder weather. When using rat and mouse bait, place the products in areas that are inaccessible to your companion animals.

ALWAYS Be Prepared !!!!

ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center

The ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center, an operating division of the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) is a unique, emergency hotline providing 24-hour-a-day, 7-day-a-week telephone assistance to veterinarians and pet owners. The Center's hotline veterinarians can quickly answer questions about toxic substances found in our everyday surroundings that can be dangerous to animals. The Center maintains a wide collection of reference materials and computer databases that help provide toxicological information for various species. Veterinary professionals provide around-the-clock, on-site coverage of the Center. There are 22 licensed veterinarians and one Doctor of Pharmacy on staff. Five of the veterinarians are Diplomates of the American Board of Veterinary Toxicology and three are Diplomates of the American Board of Toxicology. Six veterinarians hold advanced degrees, including three PhD's. The licensed staff members share over one hundred and ten years of combined call center experience and over seventy-five years of combined toxicology, clinical, and diagnostic experience. The phone number of the Center is 1-888-4-ANI-HELP (1-888-426-4435) and the website is www.apcc.aspca.org.