

ORCHARD HILLS VETERINARY HOSPITAL

Emergencies

When your pet has a medical emergency, being prepared is very important. Be sure you know how your veterinarian handles emergencies. Some veterinarians are always on call and others use an emergency hospital after hours.

You **should not** use the Internet in an emergency situation. **Always seek veterinary care following first-aid attempts.**

Possible Incidents

Bites

If your pet is bitten, approach carefully and muzzle the animal. Wear gloves if possible. Check the wound for debris and clean it with saline, balanced electrolyte solution, or water. Wrap the wound to keep it clean. Apply pressure to stop the bleeding, but do not use a tourniquet.

Bleeding

Apply firm, direct **pressure** for at least 10 minutes until the bleeding stops. Avoid cutting off circulation.

Breathing stops

Check to see if the animal is choking on a foreign object. Place the animal on a firm surface with its left side up and listen for a pulse in the area where the elbow touches the chest. If the animal has a pulse but is not breathing, close the animal's mouth and breathe **directly into its nose** until the chest expands. Repeat 12 to 15 times per minute.

If there is no pulse, apply **heart compression**. The heart is located in the lower half of the chest, behind the elbow of the front left leg. Place one hand below the heart to support the chest and the other hand over the heart. Compress gently. In small animals, compress the heart with the thumb and forefingers of one hand. Apply compression 80-120 times per minute in large animals and 100-150 times per minute in small animals. Alternate heart massage and breathing.

Please note: Successful resuscitation is rare, even in the hands of veterinary health professionals. Success is slightly higher in cases of drowning and electrical shock.

Burns

Symptoms include singed fur, blistering, swelling, and skin redness.

Dry chemicals should be gently brushed off the animal and may be activated by water. Flush the burn immediately with large amounts of cool, running water and apply an ice pack wrapped in a light towel for 15-20 minutes.

Choking

Symptoms include difficulty breathing, excessive pawing at the mouth, and blue lips and tongue.

Caution: The animal will likely be frantic and more likely to bite. If the pet is breathing, keep it calm and go to the veterinarian as quickly as possible. Check to see if a foreign object is visible. Carefully clear the airway by removing the object with pliers or tweezers. Do not push it farther down the throat. If it is lodged too deeply or the pet collapses, place your hands on both sides of the rib cage and apply firm, quick pressure. Or, place the animal on its side and strike the side of the rib cage firmly with the palm of your hand 3 or 4 times. Repeat this procedure until the object is dislodged or you arrive at the veterinarian's office.

Diarrhoea

Withhold food for 12-24 hours. Continue to give water. At-home treatment without determining the actual cause can worsen the situation.

Fractures

Symptoms include pain, inability to use a limb, or limb at odd angle.

Muzzle the pet and check for bleeding. If you can control bleeding without causing more injury, do so. **Do not attempt to set the fracture** by pulling or tugging on the limb. Support the injured area as best you can.

Heatstroke

Symptoms include rapid or difficult breathing, vomiting, high body temperature, and collapse.

Place the animal in **cool water**, gently soak it with a garden hose, or wrap it in a cool, wet towel. Do not overcool the animal to a rectal temperature of lower than 103° F.

Poisoning

Symptoms include vomiting, convulsions, diarrhea, salivation, weakness, depression, and pain.

Determine what the pet ingested and how much. **Call your veterinarian or poison control center immediately.** Do not induce vomiting. If there are toxins or chemicals on the skin, request directions on how to proceed.

Seizures

Symptoms include salivation, loss of control of urine or stool, violent muscle twitching, and loss of consciousness.

Move the animal away from potentially harmful objects. Use a blanket for padding and protection. Do not attempt to restrain the pet during the seizure. Time the

seizure (they usually last only 2 to 3 minutes). Afterwards, keep the animal calm and quiet.

Shock

Symptoms include irregular breathing and dilated pupils.

This condition may occur with serious injury or fright. Keep the animal gently restrained, quiet, and warm, with the lower body elevated.

Vomiting

Withhold food for 12-24 hours. Give ice cubes for 2 hours after vomiting stops and slowly increase the amount of water and food over a 24-hour period.

Emergency Equipment

Muzzle

Use a strip of soft cloth, rope, necktie, or nylon stocking. Wrap around the nose, under the chin and tie behind the ears. Care must be taken when handling weak or injured pets. Even normally docile pets may bite when in pain. Allow the pet to pant after handling by loosening or removing the muzzle. Do not use a muzzle in a case of vomiting. Cats and small pets may be difficult to muzzle. A towel placed around the head helps control small pets.

Stretcher

A door, board, blanket, or floor mat can be used as a stretcher to transport injured or weak animals.

First Aid Kit

A specialised First Aid Kit for Dogs is essential. It can be used to treat a large number of ailments temporarily until veterinary care can be sought.