

Basic First Aid for Pets

Take the ARC First Aid for Pets Course.



This material produced by the Palo Alto Humane Society in conjunction with the American Red Cross Northern California Disaster Preparedness Network and the Independent Living Resource Center, San Francisco, CA in cooperation with June Kailes, Disability Consultant through a grant from The American Red Cross Northern California Disaster Preparedness Network

Basic Supplies:

Gauze pads, gauze roll/bandages, roll of cloth, vet wrap, bandage tape, latex gloves, thermometer, tweezers, muzzle appropriate size for animal, saline solution, 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

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).

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.

Temperature

Normal temperature 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:

- **Fractures**
 - Muzzle animal.
 - Gently lay animal on a board, wooden door, tarp, etc. padded with blankets.



Basic First Aid for Pets

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

• 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 the amputation or disability of the limb

• Bleeding (internal)

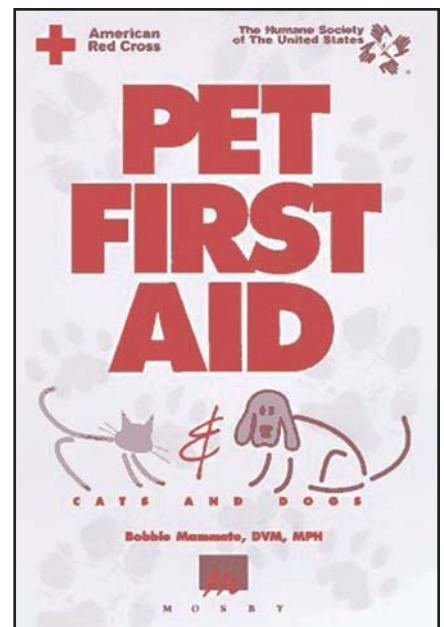
- Symptoms: bleeding from nose, mouth, rectum; coughing blood; blood in urine; pale gums; collapse; rapid or weak pulse
- Keep animal as warm and quiet as possible

• 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

• 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



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.

Basic First Aid for Pets



BIRDS

All of the following situations require immediate veterinary care:

- **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.

- **Bleeding**

- Broken “blood” feather (new feather).

- ✳ Pull feather out gently; bleeding should decrease

- ✳ Apply “kwik stop” powder or styptic to stop bleeding

- ✳ Flour or cornstarch can be used in an emergency.

- **Puncture Wounds**

- Wrap bird in towel or sock.

- ✳ See veterinarian: antibiotics are required to prevent infections.

- **Restraint**

- Carefully wrap bird in towel, gently folding his/her wings against the body. Keep your hands out of the way of the beak.

- 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**

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

ALL ANIMALS

- **Death**

- Inquiries regarding euthanasia of dying animals should be directed to your personal veterinarian in advance.

- If an animal is already deceased, you need to tag, cover and move it to a cool place until additional assistance is available.

