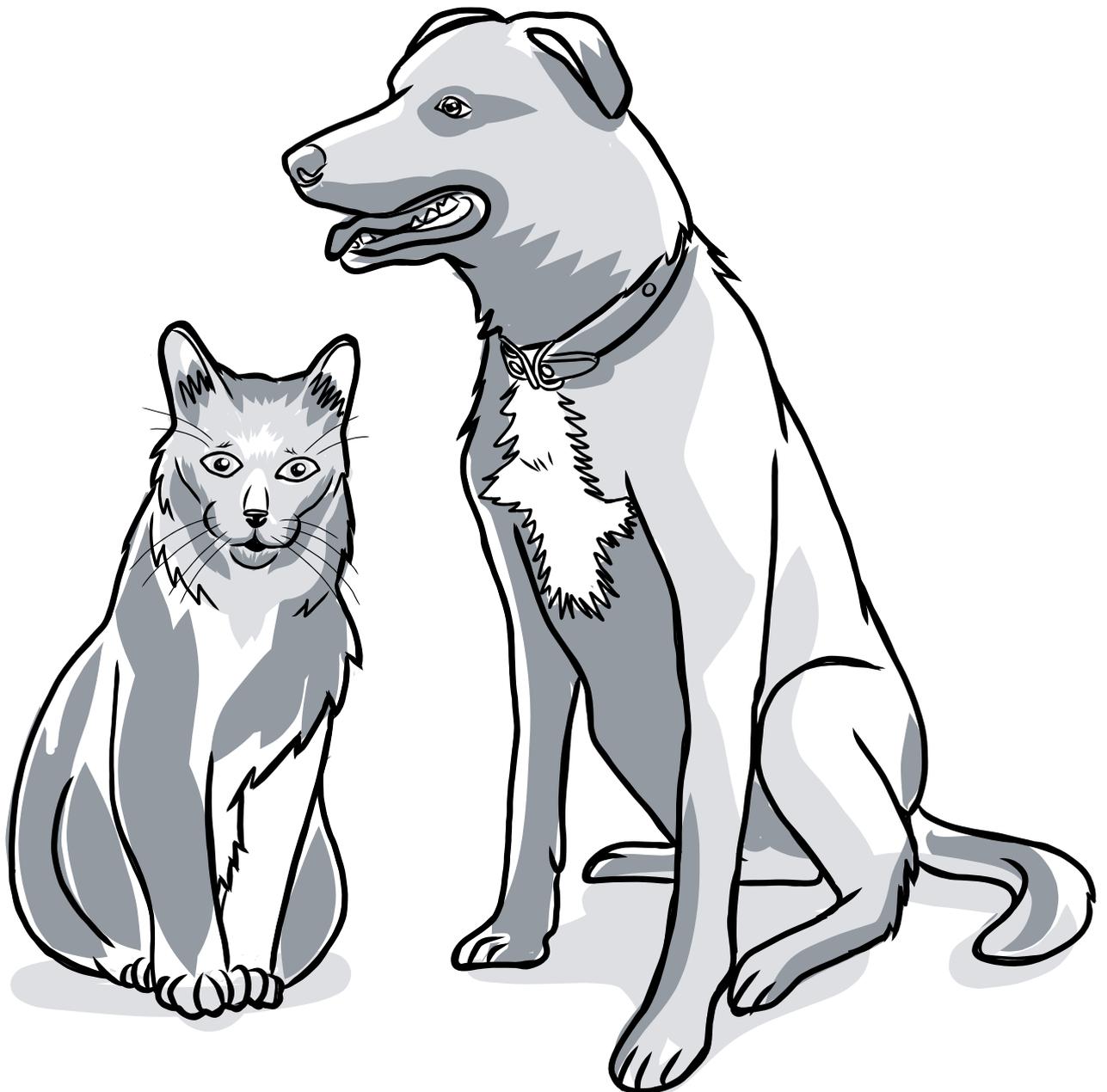


Essential Pet First Aid Guide





Just like humans, pets get injured and ill. Knowing how to help your pet before you get to the vet can save their life.

This veterinarian-approved Essential Pet First Aid Guide for dog and cat owners is designed to give you basic advice on how to help your pet in an emergency.

However, it is not intended to replace veterinary advice. Always seek professional advice from a registered veterinarian. In an emergency, take your pet to the closest vet even if you're not registered with them. Any vet will see you in an emergency. If your vet is closed or if it is after hours, please call the nearest veterinary emergency centre.

Your Pet First Aid Guide

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Useful numbers

My regular vet

.....

My nearest vet

.....

The nearest emergency
veterinary centre

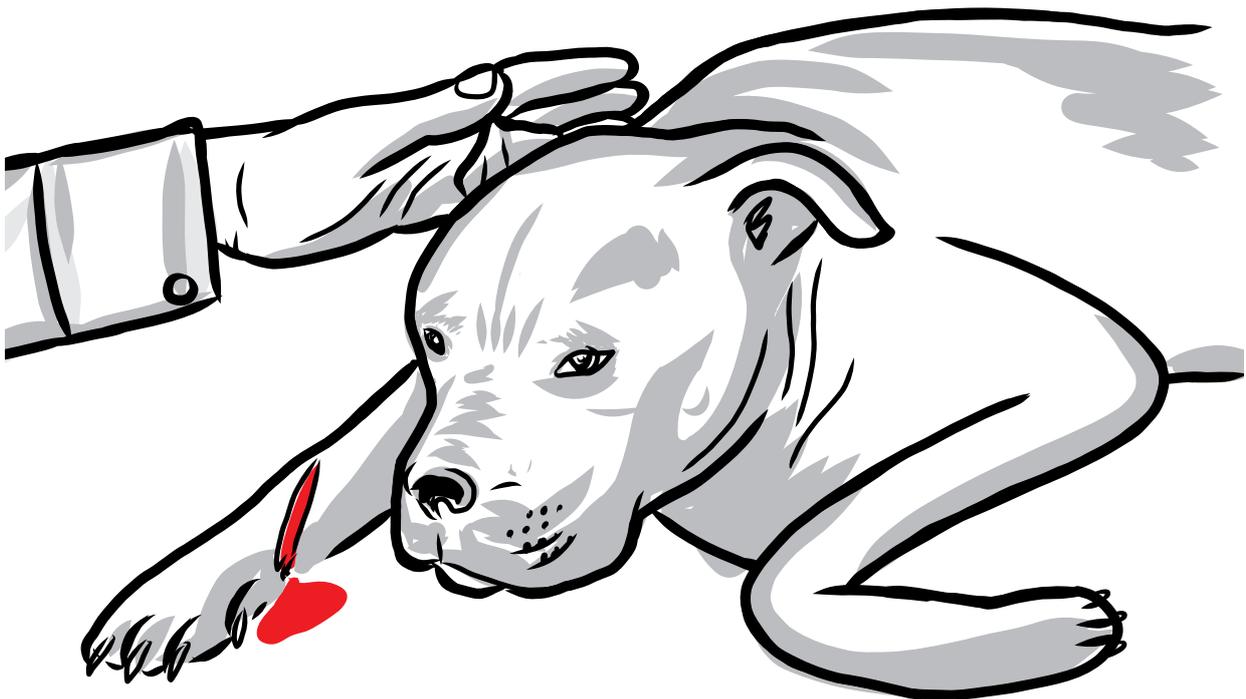
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Australian Red Cross cares about the wellbeing of all creatures great and small.

We provide this guide as part of our suite of free first aid resources, so that you might be well equipped to care for your beloved pets.

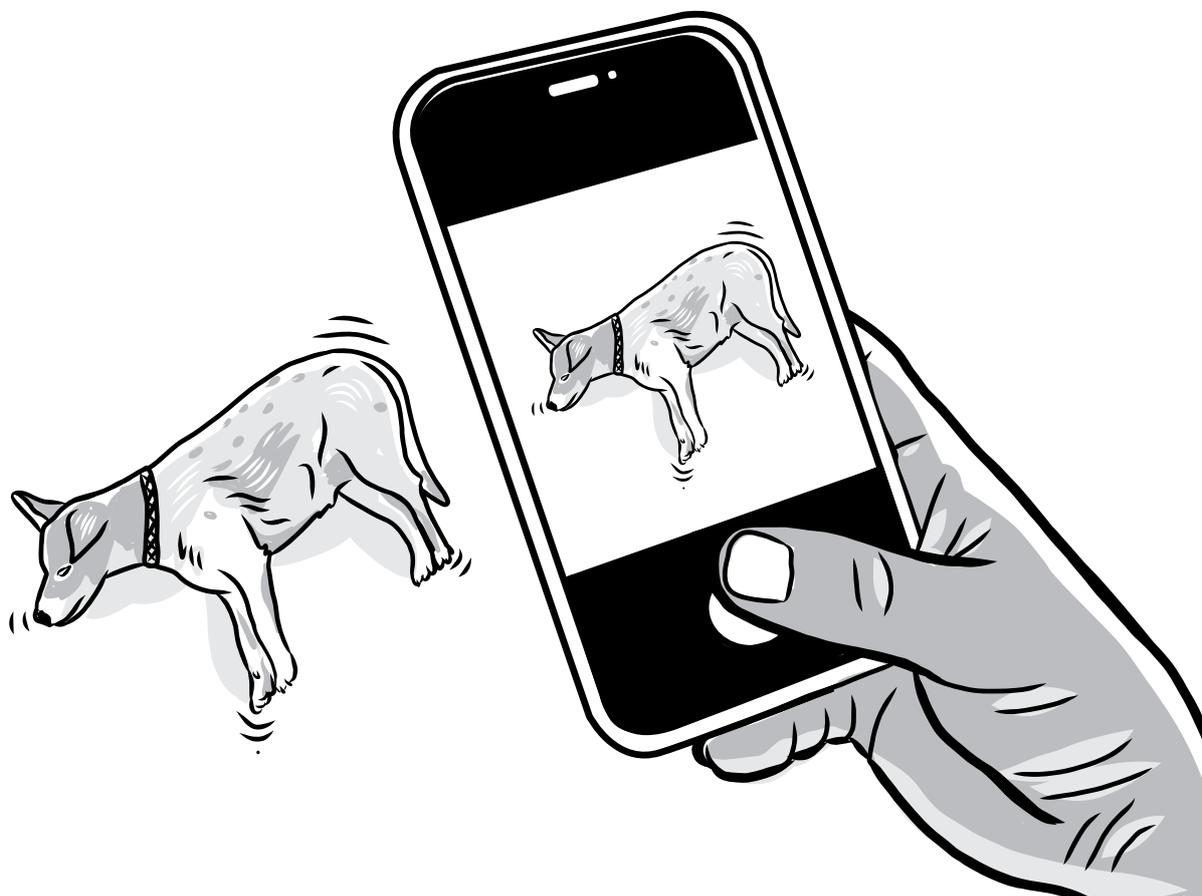
To learn more about Pet First Aid, please visit our website where you can find training courses and emergency advice, developed by qualified veterinarians.

Bleeding



1. Keep your pet calm by speaking gently and approaching quietly.
2. With clean hands, explore your pet to identify the source of the bleeding. Take care; an animal in pain may bite.
3. Using a clean towel or bandage, apply firm pressure on the wound.
4. If the bleeding doesn't stop or your pet remains unwell, contact your vet for advice or take your pet directly to your local vet.

04 Seizure



If your pet is moving their paws randomly and doesn't respond when you call them, they may be having a seizure.

1. Call your pet's name and see if they respond. **Don't hold them. Even the mildest of pets could seriously injure you as you try to comfort them.**
2. Clear the area around your pet so they don't hurt themselves.
3. To provide information for the vet, film the seizure and time its duration.
4. If the seizure lasts longer than two minutes, your pet needs to see a vet as soon as possible. Be very careful when moving your pet. If you're concerned, call your vet for advice.
5. If the seizure ends within two minutes, try to keep your pet calm. You should still call your vet for advice.
6. Once the seizure is over, your pet may move around but they may be disorientated. Watch them to ensure they are safe.

Poisoning

05



If you think your pet has eaten something they shouldn't:

1. Ring your vet to check if you need to take your pet in.
2. Take note of when the item was eaten and how much your pet had. Take the packaging with you to a vet, as well as some spare towels (in case your pet vomits).
3. If your pet vomits, check to see if any of the toxic product is in the vomit.

4. Try to keep substances that are poisonous to your pet out of reach where possible.

Common causes of poisoning in pets include:

- Raisins
- Chocolate
- Garlic
- Paracetamol
- Slug bait
- Anti-freeze
- Xylitol sweetener (often found in sweets or chewing gum)
- Grapes
- Lily flowers (cats)
- Onion
- Ibuprofen
- Rat bait
- Mouldy food

06 Dehydration



Our pets can easily become dehydrated when they don't eat or drink, when they vomit, or when they have diarrhoea or increased urination.

But while dehydration is a common condition, it should be taken seriously. Extreme dehydration can lead to kidney and other organ failure, unconsciousness and even death in extreme cases.

Signs your pet is dehydrated may include a loss of skin elasticity, loss of appetite, panting (though this is more subtle in cats), vomiting, reduced energy, dry or sunken looking eyes, a dry nose, dry sticky gums or saliva that appears thick like a paste.

To check if your pet is dehydrated:

1. Check their skin elasticity. Pull the skin between their shoulder blades; it should spring back into shape. If the skin stays 'tented', this can be a sign they are dehydrated.
2. Offer them small amounts of water to drink every few minutes or offer them pieces of ice to lick. If your pet is not interested in the water, try mixing some water with their food, or mixing some flavouring (such as a teaspoon of chicken or beef broth) to their water.
3. If you're concerned, take your pet to the vet.

Heat Exposure

07



Like people, pets can suffer from heat stroke if left in hot places such as a car or if they've exercised in hot weather.

The most telling sign of heat stroke in dogs and cats is excessive panting and drooling, though in cats this is more subtle. Your pet may also become agitated, weak and confused, have an increased heart rate, show breathing distress, vomit or have diarrhoea, or display uncoordinated movements. Eventually they may lose consciousness or collapse.

If you suspect your pet has heat stroke:

1. Move them to a cool place and cool them as best you can with cold water, a fan or air conditioning.
2. Ensure they have plenty of fresh water available.
3. Even if your pet looks like they are recovering or you just suspect they have heat stroke, they should always be checked by a vet as soon as possible.

08 Road accident

1. After an animal has been hit by a vehicle, only approach if it's safe to do so. Ask bystanders to stop traffic for you.
2. Gently assess your pet for any bleeding or any wounds (refer to 'Bleeding' section on page 3) and check if they are breathing. **Take care when moving your pet; an animal in pain may bite.** Gently move them off the road as soon as possible.
3. Find a clean towel to stop any bleeding. If there isn't one at hand, you may need to ask those around you for assistance, or use items that are available such as clothes.
4. Take your pet to the vet immediately. Even if there are no visible signs of injury, they may have internal bleeding.



Snake, Spider or Insect Bite



It's not always possible to know when your pet has been bitten by a snake or insect. They may cry out or they may not even be aware of it.

Signs a snake, spider or insect has bitten your pet include swelling in the face or a limp.

1. If you see a snake, spider or insect nearby, take a photo.
2. Keep calm to help soothe your pet and minimise their distress and movement; movement helps the venom spread around the lymphatic system.
3. Apply a pressure bandage over and around the bite site to help slow the venom from spreading to the heart. **DO NOT** apply a tourniquet as this may restrict blood flow. **DO NOT** attempt to remove the sting or clean the bite site. Some methods cause more harm than good and washing off the venom may prevent the vet from identifying the type of snake that bit your pet. **Be careful when moving your pet; if they are in pain, they may bite.**
4. Contact your vet or take your pet immediately to a vet for treatment.

Learn Pet First Aid with Red Cross

Want to further develop your pet first aid skills so you're prepared in any emergency?

Know how to check your pet's vital signs?

Keen to learn about preventative care to keep your pet healthy?

Want the reassurance of knowing you're doing the very best for your pet?

The veterinarian-approved Australian Red Cross Pet First Aid online course takes between 30 and 60 minutes, can be done in your own time and is compatible with both desktops and tablets.

To find out more about the Australian Red Cross Pet First Aid course, or to purchase the Pet First Aid Bundle that includes the course and our Pet First Aid Kit:

redcross.org.au/petfirstaid
1800 Red Cross (733 276)

Disclaimer

This guide has been developed for educational purposes. Its content is not designed to substitute emergency assistance or medical advice from your veterinarian.

This ebook has been reviewed by Dr Philip Brain, a small animal medicine specialist with over 30 years of experience as a small animal veterinarian. He has donated his time pro bono in recognition of the continued good work of the Red Cross.

You should never delay seeking medical advice, disregard medical advice or discontinue medical treatment because of information in this guide.

If you have any questions concerning the appropriateness or the use of information provided in this guide, please seek medical advice from your veterinarian.

The information provided in the guide is provided in good faith but without express or implied warranty.

To the extent permitted by law, Australian Red Cross Society accepts no liability for any injury or damages including, without limitation, indirect or consequential damages, or any damages whatsoever arising from the use or in connection with the use of the guide, whether in contract or in negligence.

Notes

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First Aid