



It's an Emergency – What do I do?

As a pet owner, it is important to be prepared for emergencies so that, if your worst fear is ever realized – you know what to do.



Identifying an emergency is critical. Emergencies can be caused by many things including severe acute illness (ie. painful urination/blockage or trouble breathing), a traumatic incident (ie. getting hit by a car or attacked by another animal), a health event (ie. seizure or collapse) or an indiscretion (ie. poison or foreign object ingestion).

No matter what is happening – **remain calm.** Your pet will be able to sense your fear, stress and anxiety so stay focused on them, speak in a soothing voice and move slowly but efficiently. Pain often makes pets more agitated and fearful, sometimes leading them to further injure themselves by getting overexcited or moving in a way they shouldn't.

If a pet is having **difficulty breathing**, remember that a coughing pet is a breathing pet. Pay attention to the colour of their gums – a dark brick red, blue or pale pink/white means immediate care is required. If you believe they are choking, do not attempt to reach down their throat unless they have lost consciousness or are not coughing/trying to dislodge it themselves as you could make things worse. If they have lost consciousness, then you may attempt to clear their airway.

If a pet is **bleeding**, apply pressure to the area and monitor closely to see if the bleeding subsides. If a pet is bleeding from the tongue, nose, rectum seek help right away.

If you believe your pet has ingested **poison**, do not attempt to induce vomiting as, depending on the poison or toxin, you could make things worse.

If your pet is in **pain**, vocalizing, limping or trembling, do not give human pain medications as the majority of them are not safe for dogs and cats.

If your pet has severe **vomiting or diarrhea**, take a photo and save a sample for the veterinarian to look at. Do not force your pet to eat or drink before consulting with your veterinarian.

If your pet is having a **seizure**, try to keep them from injuring themselves but be aware of the fact that they may have involuntary movements which could cause them to bite you. Do not lean over their face, attempt to kiss them or hold them in a way that puts you at risk.



If you believe your pet may have a **broken bone**, try to avoid movement by gently stabilizing and immobilizing the area (consider empty toilet paper roll or bubble wrap).



It is important to **have your veterinarian's contact details handy**. If you are not good at remembering the hospital name – save it in your phone under “veterinarian.” Keep it simple so that in the moment, you do not have to worry about these details. Know in advance who your veterinarian recommends for emergency after-hours care and ensure these details (and their location if at a different facility) are also kept handy. All of this information should also be conveyed to other key people (members of your household to the pet-sitter and dog walker).

Have pertinent details about your pet's medical history, ongoing/existing medical conditions and/or medications saved somewhere that is easily accessible. In an

emergency, these details may be important for an emergency vet who doesn't have a patient medical record to refer to. If your pet does have a chronic condition, consider putting a tag on them to indicate this, or updating your microchip profile so that if you are separated, this information is more likely to become known right away.

When **transporting your pet**, try to keep them contained and calm, preferably in a carrier/kennel. If not contained, be aware that if their condition worsens their behaviour may not reflect their usual personality and so the people around them need to be vigilant so as not to be accidentally bitten or scratched.

Pet emergencies can develop from **serious to life-threatening in minutes to hours**. It is often the case that, the earlier the pet can be assessed and the treatment begun, the better the outcome and the less intensive, invasive, risky and costly the diagnostics and treatments have to be.

Whenever possible, **call the hospital** to let them know you are on your way. This way the team can prepare for your arrival and be able to immediately respond to your pets' needs in a critical time frame.



We hope you never have to use this information but want you to be ready if an emergency ever occurs.

In our area, the local emergency vets are:

- Kingston Regional Pet Hospital - 1381 Midland Ave, Kingston, ON K7P 2W5 - [\(613\) 634-5370](tel:6136345370)
- Quinte Regional Pet Hospital - 5529 Highway 62 S, Belleville, ON K8N 4Z7 - [\(613\) 968-9956](tel:6139689956)
- Princess Animal Hospital - 1027 Bayridge Dr, Kingston, ON K7P 3B8 - [\(613\) 634-7123](tel:6136347123)