

Pet First Aid

Knowing what to do in an **emergency** can be the difference between **life** and **death**.



Pet First Aid

Being clued-up on first aid could help save your pet's life in an emergency. Our vets have put together this guide for pet owners to help you learn which steps to take should a pet become seriously ill or injured.

Recognising an emergency

Your pet definitely needs to see a vet as an emergency if they:

- 🐾 Aren't breathing or are having difficulty breathing
- 🐾 Are unresponsive
- 🐾 May have broken bones
- 🐾 Are having a fit/seizure
- 🐾 Are having difficulty moving or coordinating movements
- 🐾 May have eaten something toxic
- 🐾 Have collapsed and can't get up
- 🐾 Have been vomiting or passing diarrhoea for more than 24 hours.

REMEMBER:
If you're worried about your pet,
call your vet



What to do in an emergency

- 🐾 Don't panic. If your pet is injured, you'll be more help to them if you can stay calm
- 🐾 Call your vet. Explain what's happened and let them know that you're on the way and when you'll arrive. If it's an evening or weekend, you might get a message giving you details of your local out-of-hours vet
- 🐾 Don't try to deal with serious injuries yourself. This could put you and your pet in danger. Pets can lash out when they're in pain which can injure you and cause more complications for your pet
- 🐾 Don't give your pet anything to eat or drink unless your vet tells you to.

Be prepared for emergencies: it could save a pet's life

- 🐾 Keep your vet's name, address and telephone number stored in your mobile phone, your landline, and kept in an address book or safe place around the home.
- 🐾 Keep a pen and paper handy to take down any important instructions from your vet

- 🐾 Call your vet first. You'll need to let them know there's an emergency case on the way and follow any instructions you're given e.g. you may find emergencies are seen on a different site
- 🐾 Keep a pet first aid kit at home and with you when you're travelling.






Giving CPR to pets: our vets' advice




We would always advise owners to take veterinary advice, or attend a veterinary-led first aid course, to learn how to deliver CPR in the safest way.

Unfortunately, CPR usually isn't appropriate or successful for pets. Those who have an underlying illness or disease are unlikely to recover, even if given CPR. However, CPR can save lives in some situations – for example, if a healthy pet's heart has stopped, due to a specific cause, like drowning or choking.



Checking if your pet needs CPR:

-  Try to stay calm
-  Quickly assess the airway and breathing
-  Remember your ABCs:



A for Airway:

-  Pull the tongue forward
-  Check there's nothing in the throat
-  If there's something blocking the airway, remove it, taking care not to push any obstructions further down the throat.

B for Breathing:

-  Look and listen. Are they breathing? Can you see the chest rising and falling or feel breath coming from the nostrills or mouth?
-  If they're not breathing, immediately check for a heartbeat.

C for Circulation:

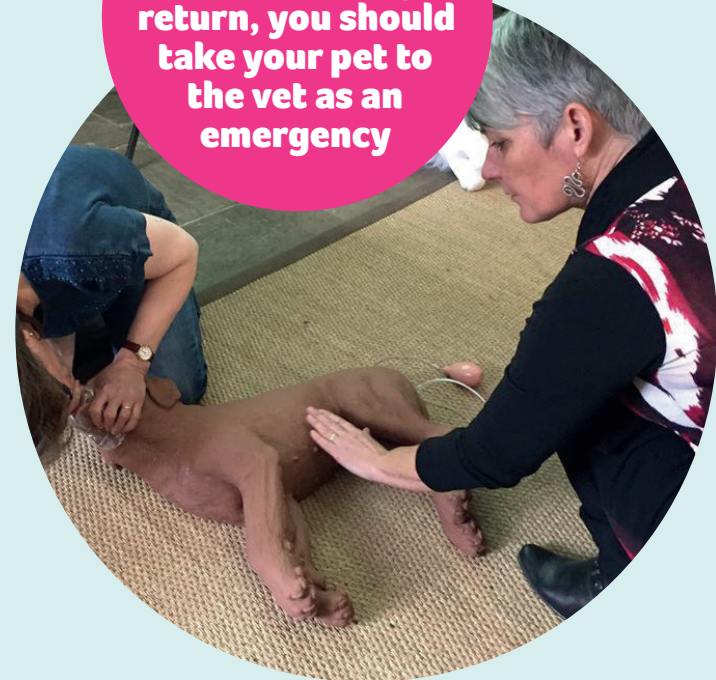
-  Place your hand or ear over the chest, where the elbow meets the ribcage. Can you feel/hear a heartbeat?
-  If you are sure there is no heartbeat, start CPR.

Performing CPR

- 🐾 Place your pet on their right side on a firm, flat surface. Dogs with barrel-shaped chests need to be lying on their backs and CPR compressions are done at the midpoint of the chest
 - **For small dogs, use one hand, but for large dogs, use both hands interlocked**
 - **For cats use one hand to compress the chest from both sides while they are lying on their side.**
- 🐾 Perform two chest compressions per second at the widest part of the chest. (Remember the song 'Staying Alive' – doing it to this beat is about right)
- 🐾 Each compression should depress the chest by a half to two thirds. The chest should be allowed to return to the normal position after each compression
- 🐾 Keep your arms straight and if you have someone with you, swap regularly as the process is very tiring
- 🐾 After 30 compressions, extend their neck, close the mouth and blow down their nose. Give a 1 second breath and 1 second release.

- 🐾 It is possible to create a seal with your mouth around small dog's noses, but for larger dogs you need to close the sides of the nostrils with your hand and blow down the nostrils from the front
- 🐾 Check for a heartbeat
- 🐾 If the dog is still not breathing and there is no heartbeat, repeat the process - giving 30 compressions and two breaths - until veterinary help arrives or until the heartbeat and breathing return.

Even if your pet's heartbeat and breathing return, you should take your pet to the vet as an emergency



Heatstroke in pets

Pets can quickly overheat in hot weather.

Avoid heatstroke by:

- ❧ Never leaving your pet in a car/caravan/conservatory on a hot or warm day
- ❧ Making sure they always have access to shelter and shade
- ❧ Not walking dogs during the hottest part of the day – wait until it's cooled down





If you think your pet has heatstroke, it's an emergency. You'll need to gradually lower their body temperature so they can recover.

- ❧ Move your pet into a shady, cool area
- ❧ Pour small amounts of room-temperature water over their body. Don't use cold water as this could put your pet into shock
- ❧ If you can, wrap your pet in wet towels and put them in front of a fan. Replace towels every five minutes as the heat can get trapped between the body wall and towel and make your pet even warmer
- ❧ Let them drink small amounts of cool water
- ❧ Keep pouring water over them until their breathing starts to settle. Don't cool them down so much they start to shiver
- ❧ Once they've cooled down, take them to the vet as an emergency. They'll need to be checked over.





Traffic accidents





If your pet is in a traffic accident the best thing to do is keep calm and don't panic

-  **GET SOMEONE TO PHONE THE NEAREST VET**
-  Approach the pet from the front so they can see you
-  Avoid any sudden movements
-  Speak gently, using the pet's name.

Next, assess the situation:

-  What's the danger to you and others?
Always make sure it's safe to intervene
-  Direct the traffic around the accident if you can.

Then you can move the pet away from traffic and get them to a vet:

-  Don't move the pet if you think they might have damaged their spine – unless your vet tells you to
-  If the pet can walk, gently coax them to a car and help them get in
-  If they can't walk then lift them with one hand under their hind legs and the other around their chest. If they're too big to carry, use a blanket, coat, rug or firm board as a make-shift stretcher
-  As you move them, make sure their breathing isn't obstructed.

A pet first aid kit

A good pet first aid kit will contain all the things you'll need to give simple first aid for small injuries at home. Even if you can treat your pet using your first aid kit, you should take them to your vet for a check-up as soon as possible.

Your first aid kit should have:

-  Bandages*
-  Blunt-ended scissors
-  Wound wash
-  Cotton wool
-  Tweezers
-  Tick tweezers
-  Wound dressings
-  Self-adhesive tape
-  Dressings
-  Vinyl gloves
-  Foil blanket
-  Antiseptic wipes
-  For larger animals, like big dogs, keep a large blanket available to use as a stretcher.

*It can be dangerous to bandage at home without supervision as they can cut off the blood supply/make wound worse.

You can stock up on first aid supplies on our online pet store - pdsapetstore.org.uk

TOP TIPS ON PET SAFETY AT HOME

- Tidy away toys and other items that could be swallowed/chewed
- Keep human medications and cleaning products in a secure cupboard
- **Grapes, raisins, onions, xylitol, macadamia nuts, chocolate** and **mouldy foods** are **toxic** to pets
- Avoid having **Lilies, daffodils, azaleas** and **tulips**.



EMERGENCY PET INFORMATION

Vet (name / practice name):

Vet's number:

Who can help in an emergency:

Dog Kennels/Cattery Number:

Microchip number(s):

RECOGNISING AN EMERGENCY

If you are worried, always call your vet for advice!

IT IS AN EMERGENCY - IF YOUR PET:

- isn't breathing or is having difficulty breathing
- is unresponsive
- may have broken bones
- is having a fit or seizure
- is having difficulty moving or coordinating movements
- may have eaten something toxic
- has collapsed and can't get up
- has been vomiting or passing diarrhoea for more than 24 hours.

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