



## Protocol for Veterinary Emergency Consultations & Visits

### 1. Initial Contact & Triage

- **Telephone triage:** Reception or vet gathers details of the emergency (species, age, presenting signs, urgency).
- **Prioritization:** Identify life-threatening problems (airway, breathing, circulation).
- **First aid guidance:** Provide safe instructions for transport if needed.

### 2. Arrival at Clinic

- **Immediate assessment:** Rapid triage on arrival — airway, breathing, circulation, mentation, major haemorrhage.
- **Stabilization:** Oxygen therapy, IV access, fluid resuscitation, analgesia, CPR if indicated.
- **Isolation protocols:** If infectious disease suspected, direct patient to designated area.

### 3. Consultation Process

- **History taking:** Collect concise but relevant details (onset, progression, medications, trauma).
- **Physical exam:** Focused but systematic, prioritizing vital signs.
- **Diagnostics:** Point-of-care tests (blood glucose, lactate, imaging) as indicated.
- **Treatment plan:** Initiate emergency therapy, then outline ongoing care.

### 4. Communication with Client

- **Clear explanation:** Describe findings, urgency, and treatment options.
- **Consent:** Obtain informed consent for diagnostics and interventions.
- **Cost discussion:** Provide transparent estimates for emergency care.
- **Updates:** Keep owners informed during stabilization and hospitalization.

### 5. Out-of-Hours & Home Visits

- **Emergency cover:** Practices must provide 24/7 emergency access, either in-house or via referral services.
- **Referral protocols:** If unable to treat, direct client to designated emergency hospital.
- **Home visits:** Only when safe and appropriate; ensure equipment and support staff are available.

### 6. Documentation & Follow-Up

- **Medical record:** Document triage findings, treatments, communications, and consent.



- **Incident review:** Discuss case in team meetings to refine protocols.
- **Continuity of care:** Arrange rechecks, handover to primary vet, and discharge instructions.

## 7. Core Principles

- **Rapid response:** Seconds matter in emergencies.
- **Safety first:** Protect staff, clients, and patients during urgent care.
- **Team coordination:** Clear roles for reception, nursing, and veterinary staff.
- **Preparedness:** Emergency kits, drugs, and equipment must be ready at all times.

**In summary:** Veterinary emergency consultations require structured triage, stabilization, communication, and documentation. Out-of-hours protocols ensure clients always have access to urgent care, whether in practice or via referral.