

FIRST AID AND EMERGENCY CARE

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Authors



Preparing for a medical emergency involving your pet is always best accomplished before the event takes place. This series is designed to help guide you through the important decisions about first aid, as well as how and when to transport your pet quickly and safely to a veterinary hospital or emergency facility.

VeterinaryPartner.com has provided this reference information for you to browse through and expanding your knowledge of dog and cat first aid.

This Web site is an emergency preparedness ready-reference for dogs and cats. Wise preventive measures, intelligent use of first aid principles, coupled with recognition of abnormal symptoms and treatment of disorders, diseases, and problems, lead to effective health care.

A working knowledge of this information will help you eliminate some potentially dangerous circumstances and help you prepare for emergency situations.

It includes information on what to do and what not to do in specific emergency situations.

The authors encourage careful reading and occasional rereading. We have tried to make this site easy to understand, avoiding technical terms as often as possible, but defining them in context when they are necessary.

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****Dedication for Dr. Roger Gfeller**

On this 2-year anniversary of the sad date when we were shocked to learn that Roger had suddenly died, we dedicate this revised edition to Roger's memory and the spirit of collegiality, lifelong learning and commitment to patient care that defined Roger as a doctor, educator, colleague and friend.

***Introduction**

VeterinaryPartner.com has provided this complete reference book online for you to browse through, expanding your knowledge of Dog & Cat First Aid.

About the Authors and the Illustrator

Dr. Gfeller was practicing emergency medicine nearly as long as anyone in the country and had been a Board Certified Diplomate of the American College of Veterinary Emergency and Critical Care since 1993.

Abscess

A localized accumulation of pus, usually caused by an infection introduced from an animal bite or other penetrating wound.

Bandaging

We use bandages for several reasons: to protect wounds from the environment, protect the

environment from wounds, and to discourage the pet from licking or irritating a wound.

[Bee Stings / Insect Bites](#)

Any insect sting or spider bite can cause problems for your pet.

[Bleeding](#)

Learn how to stop bleeding in an emergency.

[Bloat](#)

Bloat is a life-threatening condition in which the stomach fills with air or twists upon itself.

[Burns](#)

A burn is any injury of tissue caused by heat, flame, chemicals, or electricity. Burn classification determines the severity of the wound based on the depth of the tissue injury.

[Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation \(CPCR\)](#)

CPCR (formerly referred to as CPR) is the treatment required to save an animal or human life when suffering cardiopulmonary arrest.

[Chemical Injuries](#)

Injury to tissue caused by contact with harmful chemicals such as lye, acids, and strong cleaning supplies.

[Choking](#)

Choking is interference with breathing caused by foreign material in, or compression on, the trachea (windpipe).

[Dehydration](#)

Excess loss of water from the body or inappropriate intake of water into the body.

[Diarrhea and Vomiting](#)

Diarrhea is the frequent evacuation of watery stools. Vomiting is the forceful expulsion of stomach contents through the mouth.

[Difficult Birth](#)

If the contractions are frequent, regular, and strong, and no young is produced in 15 to 30 minutes, the pet should be taken to a veterinarian.

[Drowning \(Near Drowning\)](#)

Suffocation caused by the filling of the lungs with water or other fluid. What to do?

[Electrocution](#)

It is imperative that you do not touch the pet until the electrical source has been turned off or moved. Electricity can flow through your pet and affect you as well.

[Eye Injuries](#)

Seek veterinary attention immediately as signs can indicate potentially serious eye problems that can risk your pet's vision.

[Fainting/Dizziness \(Syncope\)](#)

Fainting and dizziness may be associated with anything from low blood sugar to severe heart disease.

[Fever](#)

Fever is the elevation of body temperature in response to infection or inflammation.

[Fractures / Injuries](#)

Fracture: a break or crack in a bone. Learn about the different types of fractures and what to do.

[Hyperthermia \(Heat Stroke, Heat Prostration\)](#)

The elevation of body temperature above normal. It is sometimes indicative of a fever, but it can also be associated with severe conditions such as heat stroke or heat prostration.

[Hypothermia](#)

When a pet's body temperature dips below 100.5 degrees, the pet is too cold and must be warmed.

[Impalement and Penetrating Injuries](#)

Dogs frequently carry sticks in their mouths and suffer impalements when an end of the stick jams into the ground.

[Nosebleed](#)

If the nose is bleeding profusely and/or the bleeding lasts more than 5 minutes, seek veterinary attention.

[Paralysis](#)

It is extremely important to immobilize the spine of a suddenly paralyzed pet before and during transportation.

[Physical Exam Checklist for Pets](#)

To identify an illness or abnormal situation, you must first be able to recognize what is normal for your pet.

[Poisoning](#)

Try to get in touch with a veterinarian or a poison control center and follow their instructions. It's important to know which substances you should induce vomiting, and which ones you shouldn't.

[Preventing a Health and Safety Crisis](#)

What can you do to prevent a crisis?

[Seizures / Convulsions](#)

Seizure activity that lasts longer than 3 to 5 minutes can cause severe side effects, such as fluid in the lungs (pulmonary edema) or brain (cerebral edema). A dramatic rise in body temperature (hyperthermia) can also result, causing internal organ damage.

[Shock](#)

The term shock can mean different things to different people, and medical professionals still debate the true meaning of the word. Regardless of cause, shock is life-threatening and requires immediate attention and treatment.

[Snakebite](#)

When your pet is "struck" by a snake, it is best to assume it is a poisonous bite.

[Straining to Eliminate](#)

Straining is a frequent and sometimes exaggerated effort to have a bowel movement or to urinate.

[Sunburn](#)

Damage to the tissues caused by exposure to the sun's rays.

[Transporting the Injured Pet](#)

The first aid provider must not only identify and treat injury or illness, but must also safely transport the patient to the veterinary facility for treatment.

[When Your Pet Cannot Breathe](#)

Respiratory distress recognized by increased effort to breathe; noisy breathing; cyanosis (a bluish tinge to the lips and mucous membranes); inability to inhale or exhale.

[Wounds](#)

Many wounds will require pain control and sedation or general anesthesia for cleaning and closure once your pet has been evaluated by a veterinarian.

[z: In Closure](#)

If you have questions, seek advice from a veterinarian.