

WHAT TO DO IN A PET EMERGENCY

We all do our best to protect our pets from injury and harm, but accidents can and do happen. Seeking veterinary care is essential, but these immediate actions can make a life-saving difference for your pet.

Five most common pet first aid emergencies



1 Bleeding wounds

If your pet is bleeding, apply pressure to the wound, secure with a bandage and elevate the area.

2 Choking

If it is safe to do so, reach into the mouth to remove the object. If this doesn't work, abdominal thrusts will be needed. If an object is 'impaled' into the skin of the throat, leave it in and seek immediate veterinary help.

3 Ingestion of a foreign object

- Do not give the animal anything to eat or drink and seek veterinary care immediately.
- Do not induce vomiting without consulting a vet.
- Pet guardians can do their part by keeping plants or foods that can be toxic to animals (see spca.bc.ca for a list of harmful foods) out of reach.

4 Poisoning

If an animal has been poisoned, treatment varies depending on the toxin, and also the species. Seek veterinary help immediately. Advice is also available through the ASPCA Poison Control at 1-888-426-4435 and other online pet poison helplines.

5 Injuries related to heat and cold

- **Heatstroke:** Take the animal to a shady area, provide small amounts of drinking water (if conscious), and spray the animal with tepid water to cool them down.
- **Hypothermia:** Warm the animal with blankets/body heat and, if conscious, provide a warm sugar/water drink.
- **Frostbite:** Do not rub the area. Instead, submerge it in slightly warm (not hot) water.



Useful tips

- **Be prepared.** Keep medical history and records in a handy location and contact information for your veterinary and local 24-hour clinics in your phone can help you act quickly in an emergency.
- **Keep a well-stocked first-aid kit at home and in your car.** A first-aid kit should include: Gauze pads and rolls, antiseptic wipes, a good pair of scissors, tweezers, gloves, a shock blanket, muzzle and a mini pet first-aid manual.
- **Human Safety is Key.** Even the most mild-mannered pet may become aggressive when they are frightened and in pain. Seek help in restraining and/or muzzling your pet during treatment.

