



Top 5 Pet First Aid Situations

by Thom Somes, "The Pet Safety Guy™"

#1 Open Wounds



Including bites, cuts, lacerations and abrasions.

First aid actions include muzzling, restraint, controlling bleeding and treating for shock. Depending on the severity of the injury, the pet may need veterinary care, including stitches and medication to treat possible infection. X-rays could be warranted if any sudden blunt trauma was involved. This is a common problem and keeping a fanny pack pet first aid kit at hand is a must for every Pet Care Professional.

#2 Choking

Dogs are at greater risk of choking than cats. Cats don't usually choke because they are such finicky eaters. The greatest danger to cats is strings, ribbons and tinsel that they ingest causing an obstruction in the intestines. Items dogs usually choke on are handballs, tennis balls, chew toys and rawhides. The pet industry is bigger than the human toy industry and less regulated. Therefore, it is important to choose a toy that can stand up to the strong jaws and sharp teeth of our pets. Actions for survival for choking depend on which of the following three situations of choking they are in.

Conscious Choking: (I) is where the pet is conscious and they **CAN** cough and/or gag. If the pet can cough and/or gag, they have a better chance of getting it out themselves because they can inhale and force the object out. As the pet parent, you need to monitor the pet in case they move into the next stage. Contact your nearest Emergency Animal Hospital.

Conscious Choking (II): is where the pet is conscious and they **CAN NOT** cough, **CAN NOT** gag or you hear stridor. Stridor is a high-pitched sound caused by the wind "whistling" around the object in the airway. As a pet parent, here is where you need to take immediate action. You will need to assist the pet in doing a cough that they can not do themselves. Pet Tech does not teach doing thrusts on the soft tissue/abdomen. Rather, we teach chest thrusts, much like a bellows for a fireplace, to force the object up. As with all skills, they may not be enough and the pet can get worse. If the object does not come up, then the pet could go unconscious.

Unconscious Choking: is where the pet is either witnessed (as continuing from the above scenario) or found unconscious. If the pet were found unconscious, you would determine they went unconscious because of choking by doing the Primary Pet Assessment. Again this skill is best learned in a class. Actions for survival are to get an open airway. The object coming up or you blowing the object down can achieve an open airway

#3 Extreme Temperatures

Heat Injuries - Includes heat stroke and burns of the skin and airway. Heatstroke can occur if pets are in confined spaces with little or no ventilation or water (think of a car). Stress and warm weather with high humidity and can contribute to heatstroke in pets. Dogs cool themselves by panting, passing cooler air over their gums and tongue. Short-nosed breeds (cats, Pekinese, Boxers, Pugs, etc.) are more



susceptible to overheating, as their "radiator" (mouth and gums) is too small for their body size. Signs of heat stroke include uncontrollable panting, foaming at the mouth, rapid heart rate, vomiting, lethargy, the tongue initially bright red and a capillary refill longer than 2 seconds. Actions for Survival: include restraining and muzzling, bathing or hosing down with cool water, treating for shock, monitoring the temperature and contacting/ transporting to the nearest pet emergency hospital

Cold Injuries- Frost nip is a first degree (superficial) cold injury that does not cause tissue damage. Frostbite is a third degree (deep) cold injury causing localized tissue damage. Areas most commonly affected are the ears, paws, scrotum and tail. Cold injuries are caused by extreme and/or prolonged - exposure to low temperatures. Signs include swollen, red, painful, hard and/or pale skin. In later stages, the pet may lose skin and hair in the affected area. Prevention is best. Keep the pet indoors during extreme temperatures and if they do go outside, make sure you monitor the pet and do the Snout-to-



Tail Assessment when you bring them inside to make sure there aren't any ice crystals, snow etc. in the pads, paws and genitals. Actions for Survival include: Frost nip parts should be warmed slowly with wet warm towels. Do not squeeze or rub the affected area, as this will be extremely painful for the pet. Frostbite requires immediate attention by a Veterinarian or Emergency Animal Hospital to prevent further pain, ward off infection and to assess possible permanent tissue damage. Do not rub or warm parts during transport

Top 5 Pet First Aid Situations (Continued)

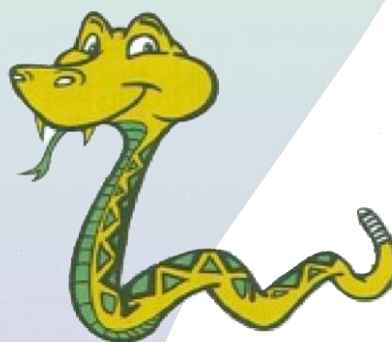


Can be caused by ants, bees, hornets, wasps, and spiders. Dogs and cats are inquisitive, and get into colonies or holes where these, insects live. The

biggest danger is a severe allergic reaction Unless you observe pet being stung/bitten the then, you may not be immediately aware of what is going on. Your first sign may. be incessant licking and scratching and then upon, investigation you find localized swelling, redness and pain at the injury site. Actions for Survival include immobilization/reducing the pet's activity to keep them from spreading the toxin further. Treat symptoms as they present and keep the pet comfortable, which is also code for under control. Before this happens, is the time to consult with your vet on what the proper dosage of antihistamine would be for your pet. Pet Tech recommends that you find "Benadryl" (diphenhydramine) in the liqui-gel caps in the blister packaging (the generic version of this is fine too). Then tape a safety pin on the back with the dosage for your pet (that you received from your vet) written on the tape too. Then carry that in your pet first aid kit. To administer, just poke a hole in the gel cap and squeeze into the pet's mouth.

Snakebites are very dirty wounds Whether the bite is venomous or non-venomous the pet needs wound care and antibiotic treatment Signs include 1-2 puncture wounds severe severe pain, swelling and bruising

If the snake is venomous, immediate Actions for Survival include restraint, muzzling, treat for shock and transportation to the nearest animal hospital that has antivenin If you live in a snake infested area then you may want to have a conversation with your vet on treatment for snakebite with antivenin.



Although these are the top 5 most likely situations you will encounter as a pet lover and Pet Care Professional, our message, as always is highlighting the importance of learning the necessary skills and techniques of CPR, first aid and care for our four legged, furry, family members.

Pet First Aid is the immediate care given to a pet that has been injured or suddenly take ill. This includes home care and when necessary veterinary help. Knowing the skills and techniques of pet first aid can mean the difference between life and death; temporary and permanent disability; and expensive veterinarian bills and reasonable home care. According to the American Animal Hospital Association (AAHA) one-out-of-four more pets could be saved if just one basic pet first aid skill or technique was applied prior to receiving veterinary care. As a pet owner and/or Pet Care Professional, we owe it to the pets in our life to be trained in these life-saving skills. To gain the skills of pet CPR, first aid and care, it is recommended you successfully complete a Pet First Aid class taught by a properly trained instructor. The skills and techniques of a pet first aid and care training should include but not be limited to: restraint and muzzling, CPR, rescue breathing, choking management, heat injuries (1st, 2nd, 3rd degree burns and heat stroke), cold injuries (frost bite and hypothermia), shock management, bleeding injuries and more. In addition, our PetSaver Training teaches the top 10 reasons to seek veterinary care, how to put together your own pet first aid kit and establishing an open relationship with your veterinarian!

Teaching Pet CPR, first aid & care is a great way to help pet lovers take better care of their pets in the event of a medical emergency. It can also be incredibly rewarding. Our family of Pet Tech Instructors and I have received thousands of "Thank You" calls, letters and even e-mails from pet owners who have taken our training and have had to use our skills



If you would like more information regarding the Pet Tech Family of Programs, please contact Leanne Carney Pet Tech Instructor: #1983
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