



## Pet Emergencies

Emergencies are easiest to deal with if you already have a preset plan in your head – much like a fire drill that gets practiced regularly. This allows you to put emotions aside, and act on “autopilot” without the need to think about it.

Firstly DON'T PANIC – be calm! Injured pets are often extremely afraid and may be abnormally aggressive. Expect that you may well be bitten, so be sure to work with the pet in such a way as to protect yourself.

Have the number of your vet or a 24 hour emergency clinic readily available.

Cover the pet and pick it up in a towel – make sure everybody in the house knows which towels can be used for the pets and where they are kept.

Remember once you have loaded everyone into the car to make sure you lock up your house! You need to arrive alive at the vet so if you drive speedily, make sure you do it safely. A few minutes longer in the car will be unlikely to affect your pets prognosis.



Now for some tips on more specific emergencies.

### Motor vehicle accidents:

Remember the towel – be careful when picking up the patient. The easiest way to transport the pet so it does not fall around and feel all the cars movements is if the pet is on someone's lap. If the dog is large, roll it onto a strong blanket or towel which can then be used as a stretcher.



### Bite wounds:

To break up a fight, try spraying or dropping water on the dogs or cats. DON'T scream – it will make the fighting worse.

Apply pressure to wounds that are bleeding. To minimise infection and speed up the healing time, do not wash or spray the wounds with anything, but be sure

you get the wounds seen to immediately.

### Choking or difficulty breathing:

Restrain the patient as little as possible. Cats will do better in a basket or box than being held while being transported.



### Seizures:

Do NOT put your fingers near or in the pets' mouth. Lie the dog on its' side with its' head down so that any vomit or saliva in the mouth will drain out and not be inhaled. Talk gently and softly to the pet while it is fitting. Simultaneous gentle pressure on both eyes could help shorten the duration of the fit.

Please do not leave a dog to seizure repeatedly.

**Difficulty urinating:**

Any dog that dribbles urine or cat that strains in the litter box should get veterinary attention as soon as possible. Blockages of the urinary tract can lead to rupture of the bladder and cause severe damage to kidney function.



**Ingestion of drugs, poisons and unsafe plants:**

Some drugs, poisons and plants will initially show no effects on the patient but will cause severe organ damage if absorbed systemically – The only universal treatment is the immediate clearing of the material from the pets' stomach. Your vet will have drugs available to safely achieve this.

**Gastric dilatation and volvulus ("stomach twist")**

Any dog, especially a large breed, whose stomach looks like a barrel soon after eating needs to be seen by a vet immediately. This dog has a life threatening stomach dilatation, which could turn anytime and become lethal.



**And lastly, if you think it may be an emergency, it probably is!**

