

Erie Animal Network Community Class

FIRST AID FOR YOUR PET

(Common Ailments And Initial Treatments For Your Pet In Need)

MARCH 4, 2013

I. What is Normal?

1. Anatomy

2. Checking Vital Signs

- HR (Heart Rate):
 - Varies with size and breed,
(dog: 70-160 bpm) (cat: 160-240 bpm)
 - Hand on left side of chest
 - RR (Respiratory Rate):
 - Resting respiratory rate,
(dog 15-30 bpm) (cat: 20-30 bpm)
 - Effort is just as important as rate
 - Cats do NOT pant or open mouth breath for any reason
 - MM (Mucous Membranes)
 - Color, CRT (Capillary Refill Time) < 2 sec
 - Pulses
 - Femoral and/or Brachial
 - Compare with heart rate
 - Temperature
 - Normal range (dog: 99.5-103) (cat: 100-102.7)
3. Once you know what is normal for your pet, you can understand abnormal issues.

II. Important Tools

1. Phone numbers:

- Local Veterinary and Emergency Clinic (Call ahead to inform)
- ASPCA Poison Control Center: 1-888-426-4435

2. Notification for Emergency Personnel (Fire, Police, etc.)

3. First Aid Kit (Commercially or Homemade)

- Basic Supplies

Absorbent gauze pads

Adhesive tape

Antiseptic wipes, lotion powder, or spray

Blanket (foil emergency blanket)

Cotton balls or swabs

Gauze rolls

Hydrogen peroxide (to induce vomiting when directed by
veterinarian or poison control)

Ice pack

Non-latex disposable gloves

Petroleum jelly (to lubricate thermometer)

Rectal thermometer

Scissors (with blunt ends)

Sterile non-stick gauze pads for bandages

Sterile saline solution (sold at pharmacies)

Tweezers

A pillowcase or sheet to confine your pet for treatment

- Additional Useful Items:

Diphenhydramine (Benadryl with NO DECONGESTANT)

Expired credit card (scrape away insect stingers)

Glucose paste or corn syrup (for diabetic dogs/cats)

Nail trimmers and styptic powder or pencil

Penlight or flashlight

Rubbing Alcohol (isopropyl)

Over-the-counter antibiotic ointment

III. Restraint of Pet or Animal

1. Handle the pet as little as possible

- Handle gently, minimize movement, place in sternal position if unconscious, do not apply pressure to stomach (painful, difficulty breathing, and vomiting patients), use backboard/stretchers if needed, cover patient.

2. Homemade Muzzle (gauze)

- NEVER muzzle pet with respiratory distress
- Use caution whenever handling sick or injured pets
- Leave on for the shortest period of time needed

3. Helpful Tools:

- Bed sheet, towel, pillow case
- Plywood
- Leather gloves
- Trash can lid

IV. Emergency Situations and Common Conditions:

1. Vomiting

- Repetitive and active abdominal contractions to evacuate stomach material.
- Potential indications of foreign body, toxin/ingestion, metabolic disorder, CNS disease, anxiety, and/or nausea (very vague symptom).
- Fast and bland diet failure - seek veterinary assistance
- GDV (Gastric Dilatation and Volvulus) "Bloat"
 - Large breed dogs (Doberman Pinscher, Great Dane, German Shepherd, Labrador Retriever.
 - Unproductive retching, weakness, lethargy/agitation, poor MM color, drooling, salivation, enlarged distended abdomen

Life-threatening

2. Diarrhea

- Can be compromising if present for long periods of time (especially in young and geriatric)
 - Could lead to or caused by gi imbalance, parasites, toxins, or ulcer of GI tract.

3. Insect Bites/Stings

- Can cause swelling, redness, and itching
 - In allergic animals can cause hives, facial swelling, vomiting, difficulty breathing and even collapse.
- Remove stinger if found, cool compress, and can apply a baking soda/water paste to area to neutralize some of the acidic venom.
 - DO NOT administer any medications unless instructed by veterinarian.

4. Choking

- Interference of breathing due to foreign material or compression of airway.
- Coughing versus Choking
 - Heimlich Maneuver only if certain of complete obstruction of airway
- If Unconscious (perform finger sweep and begin rescue breathing)
- If Conscious (stay calm, cool if overheated, seek help)

5. Toxins (Common)

- Chocolate (theobromine and caffeine) signs: hyperactivity, heart arrhythmias, vomiting, diarrhea, seizures, pancreatitis.
 - Milk Chocolate
 - Mild signs (0.7oz/lb), Mod/Severe signs (2 oz/lb)
 - Semi-Sweet Chocolate
 - Mild signs (0.3 oz/lb), Mod/Severe signs (1 oz/lb)
 - Baking Chocolate
 - Signs 0.1 oz/lb (2 small 1 oz squares for 20lb dog)
- Rodenticides: taste good to pets, poison and death from internal bleeding.
- Food Poisoning (think seasonal and waste access - garbage)
Vomiting, diarrhea, lethargy, neurologic conditions, foreign body
- Antifreeze: (Ethylene Glycol)

Vomiting, seizures, CNS depression, drunkenness, renal failure, death.

- OTC/Prescription Medications

Acetaminophen (cats) and Ibuprofen (dogs)

Anti-depressants and seizure medications

Skin creams

Blood pressure medications

Xylitol (Sugarless gums) (causes release of insulin, low glucose, liver toxicity)

- Plants

Poinsettia (nontoxic in the traditional sense)

Oral and gi upset, possible ulcers

Lilly (the entire plant is toxic to cats)

Vomiting, lethargy, renal failure/death

Raisins (grapes as well)

Unknown toxin, renal issues

6. HBC (Hit By Car)/Trauma

- Treat all scenarios as an emergency

- Never underestimate a hurt or scared pet (including your own)

- Pneumothorax, internal bleeding, diaphragmatic hernias, fractures

- Fractures: muzzle/restraint patient in comfortable fashion for transport

Do not apply traction or set fracture

Do not give oral medications

- Patient and condition can change extremely quickly (seek veterinary help)

7. Heat Stroke/Hyperthermia

- Symptoms: lethargy, panting, diarrhea with blood, seizures, coma

- How to avoid: limit exposure to outdoors on hot days, never leave pet in car, monitor large breeds, limit exercise, watch pet, provide shade and water frequently, open wire cage.

- Diagnosis by rectal thermometer

- Treatment: increase ventilation, fan, cool water bath if temp > 104, alcohol on pads, seek veterinary help immediately

8. Burns

- Do not apply “old fashion” remedies
- Protect yourself (may be chemical and/or thermal)
- Cover and clean (damp cotton cloth)

9. Bleeding, Open Wounds, Cuts, and Bruises

- Apply pressure and bandage
- Bandage material: clean cotton cloth, gauze, panty hose, ACE bandage, feminine hygiene pads, rolled newspaper and sticks for stabilization, 2 inch tape
- Soft bandage versus fixation/supportive bandage (Robert Jones)
- Tourniquet should only be used as LAST resort.

10. Seizures

- New seizure patient versus patient that is on anti-seizure medications
- Keep pet sternal with head angled down
- Avoid excessive sound or touch (may be hypersensitive)
- If toy breed or diabetic situation, carefully apply karo syrup or simple sugar to gum line
 - Grand mal and cluster seizures are absolute emergency or if seizure is lasting more than 3-5 minutes in duration
 - Watch for post ictal aggression and do NOT give oral meds or examine oral area during seizure

11. Shock

- A condition resulting from a depressed state of many vital body functions caused by a lack of effective circulation.
- Basically any condition that causes a lack of oxygen supply to tissues or the inability of tissues to properly use oxygen.
Can be life threatening and requires immediate attention
 - Many causes (I.e. trauma, poisoning, insect stings/allergic reactions, infections, burns, heart failure, obstruction of airways, etc.)
 - Early signs: (difficult) excitement or subdued, rapid HR, pulse difficult to find, gums may be pale or normal
 - Late signs: extremely pale gums, cyanosis (blue gums), elevated and irregular HR, weak pulses, hypothermia, RR slow/rapid or shallow/deep, glazed eyes,

depression, stupor, coma

- Treat presenting conditions
- Do NOT pour or give anything orally, do not encourage to walk
(immobilize)

12. Eye Trauma

- Keep lubricated/flushed and clean
- Do not attempt to remove visible penetrating objects or foreign body
- Seek veterinary help immediately (time is very important)

13. Electrocution

- Do NOT touch pet until electrical source is turned off or moved
- Address wound areas with cold clean cloth
- Most occur from biting cords etc. (may present with drooling, oral pain, salivation, oral lesions, inappetence or pain upon eating)

13. CPR (Cardiopulmonary Cerebral Resuscitation) (aka CPR)

- Consists of two parts (1. Rescue breathing) and (2. Chest compressions)
- Recent research showed that using only chest compressions was as effective as chest compressions and rescue breathing as long as the airway is open.
- MAKE SURE ANIMAL IS ACTUALLY ARRESTED AND UNCONSCIOUS!
 - ABC' s
 - Airway: examine airway if possible, careful, extend head and neck, pull tongue forward (finger sweep mouth to remove debris)
 - Breathing: (mouth to snout) 10 breaths per minute
 - Cats and Small Dogs 20-25 breaths/minute
 - Medium and Large Dogs 12-20 breaths/minute
 - Circulation: Chest compression (depends on size and shape of animal)
 - Rate = 120 compressions per minute
 - 2 breaths after every 12 compressions
 - 2 minute series, 2 person job
 - RECOVER (Reassessment Campaign on Veterinary Resuscitation)

V. Books Of Interest:

1. Emergency First Aid For Your Dog (Tamara S. Shearer)
2. Pet First Aid (Bobbie Mommato DVM, MPH)