

FIRST AID FOR DOGS

FIRST OF ALL “DO NOT PANIC!”

The most common type of first aid administered to dogs is **bandaging**. Always be careful when bandaging a leg not to put it on too tight as this could restrict the circulation. It is always best to put the bandage around the paw as well.

Unless it is a very serious injury dogs do not bleed a lot and are great self healers. Most minor wounds should be cleaned and left alone unless you suspect that there is a possibility of any debris remaining in the wound.

When a dog is in distress through injury or panic it is best to improvise and make a muzzle. You can use anything you have to hand that can be placed around the dogs' nose and secured around the neck. This will give you the reassurance that they cannot bite you and in some cases can actually relax a dog.

THE THREE AIMS

- Preserve life
- Prevent suffering
- Prevent situation worsening

FOUR RULES

- Don't panic
- Check and maintain a clear airway
- Control bleeding
- Consult a Vet

Step back from the situation...

Make an assessment based upon the dog's appearance

Ensure that the dogs **Tongue** has not slipped backwards into the throat - pull forward if necessary.

Check colour of gums. If something is **restricting the dog's airway**, the gums will turn **blue**. If there is no circulation (cardiac arrest) the gums will be **pale**.

To check if the dog is **conscious**, touch its eye. If it blinks, it is awake; if not, then it is likely to be **unconscious**.

The dog's **heart** is just behind its elbow. On a small dog you can place entire hand around the chest to feel it. On medium and large dogs, place a hand on each side of the chest and feel the heartbeat.

The pulse in dogs can be found on the inside of the back leg - it's the **femoral pulse**. Over the femur (largest bone in the thigh of the back leg) is the femoral artery. Place your hand on the inside of the leg to feel the pulse. If the heart is weak, there may be a faint heart beat, but no pulse.

If the dog is not breathing, use **mouth to nose resuscitation**. A dog's mouth and jaw is too big to be able to give satisfactory respiration.

Do not be squeamish! Pull the tongue forward. Ensure there is nothing stuck in the mouth or throat. Hold the mouth firmly shut and blow down the dog's nose, until you see the chest wall rise. Give 7-10 good breaths, and then check for breathing again. If still no breathing, repeat the process, and carry on doing this until you either get the dog to the vets or the Vet arrives to take over.

Cardiac Massage: Perform around one beat per second, but do not do it too fast. On a small dog, squeeze the chest one-handed. Medium dog, squeeze with two hands. Large dog, squeeze hard with two hands. Do this for five minutes.

Heimlich Manoeuvre or Drowning: This will remove items lodged and also water from the lungs. With small dogs: hold up by legs and slap the back of ribs or squeeze with both hands. Medium to large dogs: Punch up and in, just below ribs in mid-line, and vigorously squeeze as in a hug.

Heat stroke: Rectal temp 40°C+ (104-105°F). There are many causes of this, including: hot cars, hot days, long walks, excessive panting. Signs include: Extended neck, blue tongue/gums, frantic behaviour and collapse.

Treatment for Heat Stroke: Anything to cool dog down; ice pack, river or stream, hose pipe, cold bath water, shade, wrap in wet towels during transportation to the vet. Get to vet quickly. Put the dog's paws in water.

Hypothermia: Cold extremities, dull, lethargic, shaking/shivering, slow pulse. Treatment includes: Warm bath, blankets, vigorous rubbing especially extremities. Take dog to the vets for fluids.

Burns:

First degree: reddening. Second degree: blistering. Third degree: full thickness skin loss.

Treatment: copious amounts of water and definitely no insulators ie: oils, butter etc should not be applied.

Electric shock: remove from source and do not make the situation worse.

Resuscitation: Cardiac and respiratory. Exit burns are often found through the pads of the feet; treat as burns.

Convulsions: Loss of consciousness, dog lying on its side, legs stretched out (in spasm), salivation and urination. The convulsions usually last no more than 4-5 minutes. Any longer than this you must call the vet immediately. Recovery time is variable. Don't touch the dog (initially) as this could cause more harm and distress the dog even more. Talk calmly and reassuringly in a well lit room.

Paralysis: Is it all over or localised?

Stabilise the dog as much as possible, without causing undue distress and support the head and neck as much as possible. A good make-shift stretcher is two brooms and a shirt -put the broom handle through each armhole and button up the shirt.

Snake Bites: March-May is the most common times for these in the forests during the breeding season. You might see a snake basking early in the morning (often a pregnant female). They will slither away if they spot you or your dog, but if they are not fast enough or cornered, naturally, they will bite.

The most common places for a snake to bite is on the dog's paw, leg or nose and will cause swelling. The bite can easily be identified by two small and close punctures and whilst the venom is toxic it is very rarely fatal, but do take dog to Vet immediately.

Treatment: Piriton is excellent anti-histamine which is readily available off-the-shelf at chemists in tablet form. Dosage: 2 x 4mg for small dogs; 4 x 8mg for larger dogs. Give the dog some straight away.

Bee and Wasp stings: For Bee stings use bicarbonate of soda (alkaline) as bee stings are acid. For Wasp stings use vinegar or lemon juice (acid) as wasp stings are alkaline. Always keep any eye on the dog in case of an allergic reaction to the sting

Poisoning: The dog would normally be dull and not himself, he could be shaking / shivering, showing signs of weakness or fitting. Always seek Veterinary Help as soon as possible

Many things are toxic to dogs, including onions, grapes, raisins and sultanas, flower bulbs, some mulch (contains cocoa), slug pellets, rat poison, etc, etc. Chocolate can be fatal - 60-200g, milk chocolate - 450-600g; 100mg/kg can be the fatal dose.

Treatment: Do not be squeamish. Good ways to induce vomiting: use washing powder on the back of the tongue, or washing soda crystals. **Do not use Caustic Soda as this will cause serious damage.** However do not do this if you suspect bleach or anything caustic has been consumed as this will damage esophagus and other internal organs during regurgitation!

Fish hooks: cut with wire cutters and remove the two halves.

Fishing line, thread: Often gets caught under the tongue, while the other end works its way through the stomach and the intestines. It causes the intestines to concertina, so never cut the line/thread - far safer for the vet to remove as a whole, and trace its progress through the dog's body.