

## Do You Have a Pet First-Aid Kit?

Could your pet survive an emergency if one happened today? If you haven't assembled these 14 lifesaving items, you may not be prepared. Take stock now for the unthinkable and assemble this simple collection before you need it. You'll be thankful later that you did.

**Analysis by Dr. Karen Shaw Becker**

### STORY AT-A-GLANCE

- It's important, before it's needed, to prepare for pet-related emergencies by assembling (or purchasing) a pet first aid kit
- Consider using a plastic see-through container for your kit so you can quickly see and retrieve the items you need
- There are several must-have items for a pet first aid kit, as well as a few additional tools you'll want to consider
- To help your pet survive an emergency: Be prepared, be proactive, stay cool, assess your pet's condition and be ready to answer questions

***Editor's Note: This article is a reprint. It was originally published June 08, 2019.***

Preparing a first aid kit for furry family members may not be at the top of your to-do list unless, of course, you've found yourself in a situation where you really needed one.

The truth is, faced with an emergency involving a precious family pet, many people become overwhelmed and lose their ability to think straight. And the more dire the situation, the less able they are to be effective. That's why having a pet first aid kit prepared and handy for emergencies is an excellent idea.

Its presence can refocus your attention on what you need to do, while simultaneously providing tools that can help you help your pet. Even better news is that pet first aid kits are easy to assemble and might just help you save the life of your animal companion one day.

### Recommended Supplies for Your Pet's First Aid Kit

It's a good idea to use a clear plastic container to hold the items in your first aid kit so that you can quickly find what you're looking for. One very economical solution is a plastic zipper bag big enough to hold the supplies listed below. The first thing you'll need for your kit is an emergency telephone list with the following information:

- The phone number and address of your veterinarian
- The phone number and address (and directions, if necessary) to the closest emergency animal hospital
- The phone number of your local animal ambulance or transportation service, if one is available
- The ASPCA Animal Poison Control hotline at 1-888-426-4435 and/or the national Pet Poison Helpline at (855) 764-7661

You can tape the list to the outside of your kit, or place it inside, positioned where you can read it without even having to open the kit.

- **Muzzle** — Any injured animal can become aggressive out of fear or pain, however, if your pet is vomiting, do not muzzle him (**How to make a homemade muzzle**)
  - **Triple antibiotic ointment** — Apply to a wound after it has been cleaned with povidone iodine and flushed with water
  - **Collar or harness and leash**
  - **Sterile water-soluble lubricating jelly** — Apply around your pet's eyes if you need to use soap or povidone iodine to clean a wound close to the eyes
  - **Tweezers** — For splinter or tick removal
  - **Sterile nonstick pads** — To cover a wound before bandaging
  - **Nail trimmer or clipper**
  - **Elastic bandages or gauze** — To hold a nonstick pad in place over a wound
  - **Blunt-tipped scissors** — To trim hair away from a wound, or to clip out foreign material caught in your pet's fur
  - **Hydrogen peroxide 3%** — To **induce vomiting**, but only if your vet or an animal poison control hotline instructs you to do so\*
  - **Pre-soaked povidone iodine (Betadine) pads** — To clean out cuts, wounds or abrasions, and **bottled water** — flush the wound with water after using the pre-soaked pads
  - **Clean cotton towel** — For use as a pressure bandage, blanket or sling to lift a pet who isn't able to walk
  - **Saline solution** — Regular human contact lens saline drops can be used to flush out dirt, sand or other irritants from your pet's eye; it can also be used to flush away debris from a cut or scrape
  - **Flashlight** — To help you see the thorn in your pet's paw or the tick between her toes
1. \*Always call your vet or a pet poison hotline if you believe your dog or cat may have ingested a toxic substance.
  2. Hydrogen peroxide should not be used to clean a wound, as it is known to actually slow the healing process.

## Other Items to Consider Adding to Your Pet's First Aid Kit

- Cotton balls and swabs
- Ear cleanser
- Benadryl for hypersensitivity reactions
- Bach Rescue Remedy for stress
- Homeopathic aconitum for shock
- Styptic/clotting powder to stop bleeding from broken toenails
- Thermometer
- **Yunnan Baiyao** for excessive bleeding

If you'd prefer not to make your own kit, you can also buy a ready made pet first aid kit. Be sure to keep your kit in an easily accessible location and let everyone in the family know where it is. If you're traveling with your pet, it's a good idea to either bring the kit along or prepare a second kit for the car.

Remember that administering first aid to a sick or injured pet is just the first step in handling the emergency. Always seek immediate veterinary care as soon as possible to give your pet the best chance for a full recovery.

## 5 Quick Tips for Dealing With a Pet Poisoning Emergency

The ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center (APCC) provides a list of five important tips for handling a pet poisoning emergency in your own household. These can also be useful for other types of pet emergencies:

1. **Be ready** — Before you ever need them, make sure your veterinarian's phone number, the number of the closest emergency veterinary hospital and the number for a pet poison center are saved in your phone. The APCC number is 888-426-4435; the Pet Poison Hotline is 800-213-6680.

And remember that you may be able to provide important, even life-saving initial treatment at home if you have a pet first aid kit ready and easily accessible in an emergency.

2. **Keep your cool** — Maintaining your composure when faced with a pet emergency can be hard to do, but it's really important if you want to ensure your furry family member gets the help she needs. If you stay calm, you'll be better able to provide first aid, as well as vital information to the people treating your pet.
3. **Evaluate your pet's condition** — It's important to make a clear-eyed observation of your pet's condition. Is she behaving abnormally? Is she bleeding? Is she having trouble breathing? Is she having convulsions or seizures? Is she unresponsive? If you answer "yes" to any of these questions, your pet needs immediate medical attention. Call your veterinarian or the nearest emergency animal hospital and alert them that you're on your way.
4. **Be prepared to answer questions** — What is the toxic substance you know or suspect your pet ingested? Either pack up the substance itself (this is ideal) or write down the exact name of the product or medication. You'll also want to write down the strength (typically in milligrams) of the drug, the concentration of active ingredients in herbicides or pesticides and the EPA registration number, and any other information you think might help the veterinarian who will be treating your pet.

When did the poisoning happen? Did you catch your pet actually ingesting the substance? Has your pet vomited? If so, did she vomit up any of the poison or packaging?

5. **Be proactive** — If you know or suspect your pet has ingested a poison, don't wait for symptoms before seeking help. Time is of the essence in preventing the poison from being absorbed by your pet's body. The faster you are able to treat your furry companion at home (with guidance from your vet or a pet poison hotline), or get her to a veterinarian, the better her chances for survival and a full recovery.

## Sources and References

[PetMD](#)

---