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Creating Your Pet's First-Aid Kit

In the case of an emergency situation with your pet, you should contact us immediately. In some circumstances, it may be necessary for you to begin to manage a pet emergency or injury with first-aid. Having a first-aid kit specifically for your pet can be an important tool in effectively and efficiently handling this type of situation. Remember that items stored in your pet's first-aid kit are for animal use **ONLY**, and they must not be used to treat human first-aid needs. Please contact our office before administering any medication to your pet if it was not prescribed by your veterinarian.

Your pet's first-aid should be contained in a closed container to keep the contents clean and dry. We recommend that you kit be clearly labeled "Pet First-Aid" or some similar name to make clear that the kit is for pet use.

Here are some suggested items for your pet's first-aid kit:

Hydrogen Peroxide – can be used to flush and clean wounds, and induce vomiting
Tweezers or Hemostats – can be helpful when removing items from your pet's mouth or skin

Bandage Materials

Rolled gauze bandage
Gauze sponges
Nonstick medical tape
Nonstick bandages

Rectal Thermometer

Triple Antibiotic Ointment

Individually Packaged Sterile Wipes

Styptic Powder – to stop the bleeding of a torn toenail

Scissors – for cutting bandage materials

Lubricating Jelly – for lubricating rectal thermometer

Sterile Saline Solution – for flushing eyes and wounds (do not use Visine, Murine, etc.)

Paper towels – for cleaning messy areas

Nail Clippers

Muzzle

Slip leash

Cotton swabs (ie. Q-tips)

Rubber gloves

Karo syrup or pancake syrup – for hypoglycemic episodes

Dawn dish detergent

Penlight or small flashlight

List of your pet's medications, vaccine history, and current/ past medical conditions

A written list of normal vital signs:

Body Temperature

- Use of a digital or mercury thermometer is recommended
- Carefully lift the tail and locate the anus just below where the tail meets the body

- Lubricate the thermometer, and insert it into the rectum approximately ½ inch (just enough to cover the bulb or metal tip)
- A mercury thermometer should be read after approximately 1- 1 ½ minutes. A digital thermometer can be read as soon as it beeps
- Normals- canine & feline= 101°F to 103°F

Heart Rate

- Check the heartbeat at the point where the left elbow touches the chest when bent
- Put your hand in this area and count the number of beats in 60 seconds
- Normal Heart Rate (can vary based on breed, age, and activity)- canine= 50-150 per minute, feline 160-220 per minute

Respiratory Rate - Is the pet breathing? Is the pet breathing normally?

- Looking at the chest, count the number of times the chest rises and falls in 60 seconds
- Normals (can vary based on temperature, age, and activity)- canine= 10-12 per minute, feline= 20-30 per minute

Mucous Membrane Color - What does the color of the gums look like? Are they pink? Is the capillary refill time prolonged (> 2 seconds)?

- Your pet's gum color will help you determine if the oxygen level in the blood is sufficient
- Locate the mucous membranes by lifting the upper lip
- Pink indicates that enough oxygen is in the blood stream
- Gums that appear white, pale, blue, purple, or yellow are indicative that your pet is in a crisis situation

****Note: Some breeds have naturally occurring black pigmentation in the gums. The inside of the lower eyelid can be observed if your pet has black pigmentation in the gums.*

In addition to having the above items in your pet's first-aid kit, it is a good idea to keep some clean towels and blankets on hand to aid in restraint and for keeping your pet warm and clean. The items listed are recommendations; please adjust the items in your kit to suit your pet's special needs.