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## Is It an Emergency?

### Evaluate the Situation

- **Is the situation safe?** -
  - Do not put yourself in danger
  - Do not walk or run into a busy street or intersection
  - Do not attempt to break up a fight between two dogs that you cannot control – get help!

### Evaluate the Pet

- **Level of Consciousness** - Is the pet fully conscious, partially responsive, or non-responsive?
- **Heart Rate** - Does the pet have a heartbeat? Is it normal, fast, slow, or irregular?
  - You can check your pet's 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

*\*\*\*If the pet does not have a heartbeat, begin CPR and contact us immediately*

- **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
  - Open-mouth breathing in cats (similar to panting in dogs) is normally a sign of respiratory distress. Contact us for additional information.

*\*\*\*If the pet is not breathing, begin rescue breathing and contact us immediately*

- **Body Temperature**
  - Use of a digital or mercury thermometer is recommended
  - Carefully lift the tail and visualize the anus just below where the tail meets the body
  - Insert the thermometer 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
- **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- contact us immediately

*\*\*\*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.*