



# YOUR PET FIRST AID GUIDE

In an emergency, calling your vet is essential – but it's not the only thing you can do for your pet. By keeping this guide handy and recognising certain symptoms, you can take simple steps to help save your pet's life.



# 5 TIPS TO HELP SAVE YOUR PET IN AN EMERGENCY

## 1 Call the vet ASAP

If your pet is seriously ill or you're ever in any doubt, call the vet before giving first aid.

## 2 Prevent accidents

Look for potential hazards in your home and garden, and act to prevent accidents.

## 3 Save this guide onto your device

Make sure you have it accessible so you can respond in an emergency.

## 4 Stay safe

Check that you won't be putting yourself or others in danger before giving your pet first aid.

## 5 Don't panic

Staying calm will help you give your pet the best care in the quickest time.



# WHAT SHOULD YOU HAVE IN YOUR PET FIRST AID KIT?

It's important to have a well-kept first aid kit for your pets in your home, with all the medical necessities they may need in case of an emergency.

To help you prepare, we've created a checklist of supplies you should place in your first aid kit to offer emergency first aid to your pet.

Once your kit is ready, store it in a cool, dry place and ensure everyone in your home knows where it's located.

**Remember that some supplies have use-by dates and can expire after a certain amount of time, so make sure to replace them when needed.**

*This kit is to be used as a short-term measure, in emergency situations only. Animals with any illness or injury must be taken to a vet. Failure to provide necessary vet treatment is against the law.*



- A secure container to store your first aid supplies



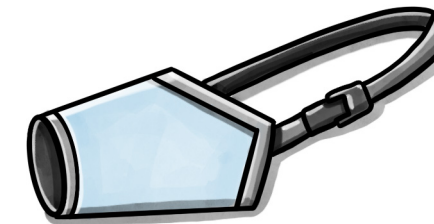
- Phone number list (nearest vet, emergency animal centre)



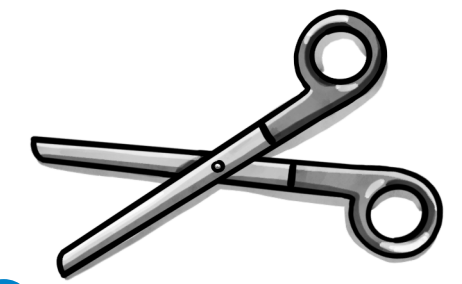
- Tweezers or needle-nose pliers



- Disposable gloves



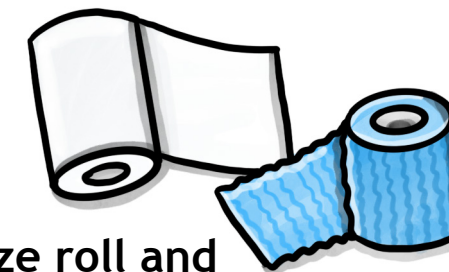
- A soft muzzle



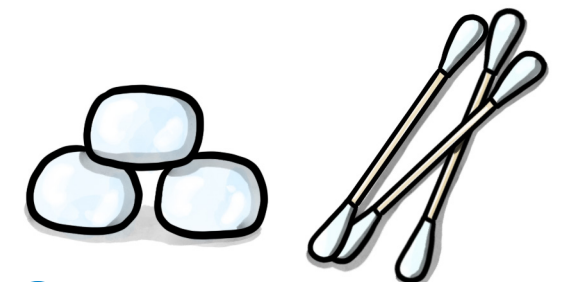
- Blunt-ended scissors



- Non-stick sterile wound dressings



- Gauze roll and stretchy bandages



- Cotton balls or swabs



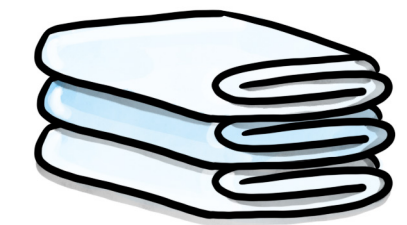
- A bottle of water



- Saline solution



- Adhesive tape



- Clean towels

# QUICK HEALTH CHECKER

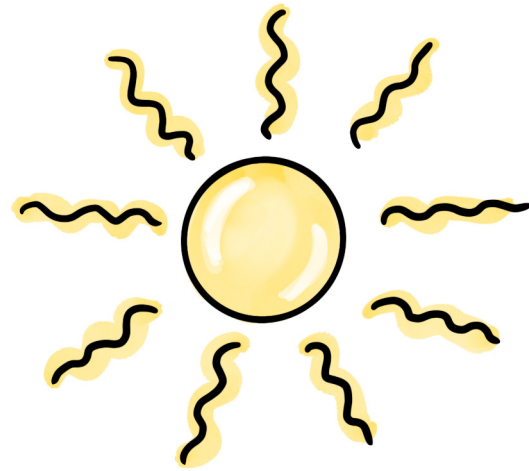
In case of an emergency, you should be able to recognise the important symptoms your pet is showing. Click on the conditions in the left-hand column to learn more.



Here are eight signs you should look out for:

	Paralysis	Convulsions	Vomiting	Gagging	Excessive Salivation	Bleeding	Collapse	Skin Irritation & Excessive Licking
Heat Stroke								
Poisoning								
Venomous Bites								
Choking								
Ticks								
Trauma								
Seizures								
Grass Seed Wound								

# HEAT STROKE



## What are the signs?

- 🐾 Increased respiration rate
- 🐾 Rapid heart rate
- 🐾 Very red gums
- 🐾 Excessive panting and drooling
- 🐾 Increased temperature
- 🐾 Collapse or weakness
- 🐾 Restlessness




## WHAT SHOULD YOU DO?


- 1 Bring your pet to a cool, shaded area out of the sun or on cool tiles near a fan. An air-conditioned room is ideal.
- 2 Use cool water or wet towels to gently cool their head, body and legs, and offer small amounts of water to drink to help your pet rehydrate. Ensure there's good air flow around your pet.
- 3 Remember to contact your vet immediately, even if the symptoms have subsided.





# POISONING/TOXICITY

## What are the signs?

 **Rodenticide:** First signs appear 1-4 days after consumption of poison or poisoned rodent. Symptoms include weakness, gagging, staggering and bleeding.

 **Snail Bait/Pellets:** Rapid onset, symptoms include twitching, drooling, and becoming very anxious. Progresses to uncontrollable twitching and seizures, which may be fatal.

 **Toad:** Rapid onset, symptoms include excessive salivation, seizures, pawing at mouth and red gums. In cats only: vomiting, hindquarter weakness and a trance-like stare.

 **Plant Toxicity:** Lilies are extremely toxic to cats and can cause kidney failure and death. Signs include vomiting and symptoms associated with kidney failure including disinterest in food, lethargy, depression and increased or absent urination.

## WHAT SHOULD YOU DO?


- 1** If you believe your pet has ingested poison or toxins, use a damp towel or face cloth to gently wipe out their mouth, if well tolerated.
- 2** With any kind of poisoning, do not give food, water or any other substances to try to make your pet vomit, unless instructed to do so by your vet.
- 3** Collect or record any material consumed, and take your pet to the vet immediately.

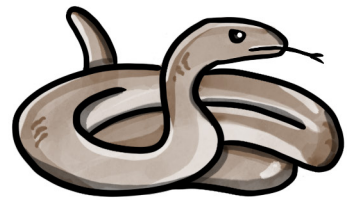



# VENOMOUS BITES

## What are the signs?




 **Insect sting:** Pain at site, swelling around the mouth, face or eyes, lethargy or reluctance to walk, collapse.



 **Snake:** Weakness, collapse, shaking, vomiting, blood in urine, dilated pupils and paralysis.



 **Redback Spider:** Intense pain at site of bite and sensitivity to touch, muscular weakness, tremors. Cats will salivate excessively.

## WHAT SHOULD YOU DO?

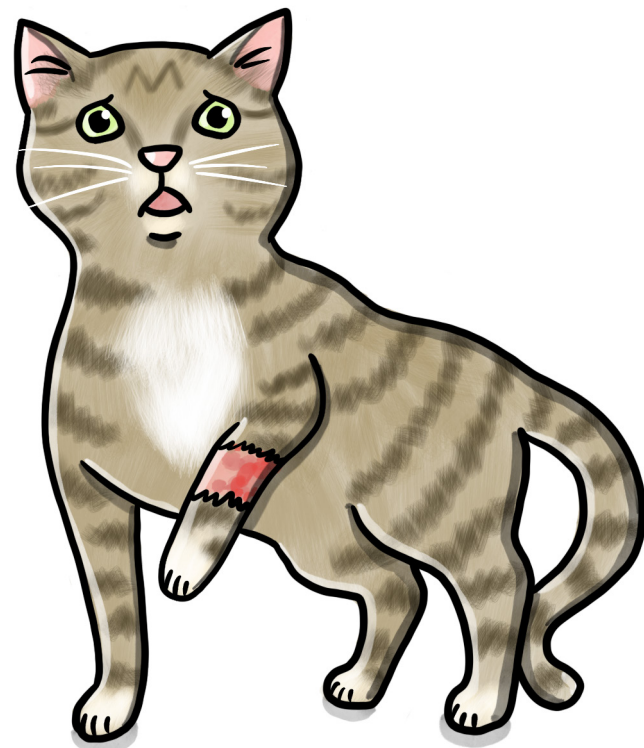
- 1** Immobilise your pet and keep them as still and quiet as possible. You may need to wrap them in a towel, if well tolerated.
- 2** If your pet has been stung by an insect, a cool face cloth might help ease pain at the site of the sting.
- 3** Take your pet to the nearest vet immediately. Anti-venom may be available and can be lifesaving. Identifying what has bitten your pet is crucial.



# TRAUMA AND BLEEDING

## What are the signs?

- 🐾 Bleeding
- 🐾 Broken bones
- 🐾 Wounds
- 🐾 Swelling
- 🐾 Animal appears lame
- 🐾 Collapse



## WHAT SHOULD YOU DO?

- 1** If your pet is bleeding, apply direct pressure with a clean cloth or gauze pad to the wound.
- 2** If the animal has been hit by a car, be aware there may be broken bones or internal injuries. If possible, carefully move them onto a board or blanket for transport to the vet. This will minimise movement and pain.
- 3** If your pet collapses, check its airways are clear and then transport the animal as per the above to the nearest vet immediately.





# CHOKING

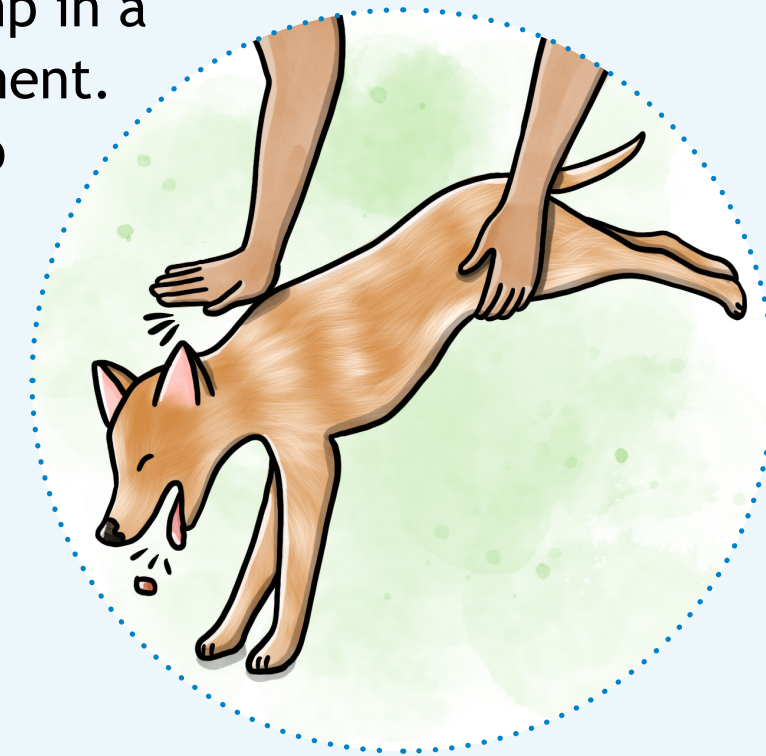
## What are the signs?

- 🐾 Attempting to vomit or retching
- 🐾 Distress
- 🐾 Disorientation
- 🐾 Bluish gums
- 🐾 Coughing
- 🐾 Pawing at mouth
- 🐾 Wheezing
- 🐾 Gagging



## WHAT SHOULD YOU DO?

- 1 If your pet is unable to breathe or has collapsed, call the vet immediately before giving first aid.
- 2 If you can see something in your pet's throat, try to grip it with a pair of pliers or tweezers. Be extremely careful not to force the object further back or to get bitten.
- 3 Small animals can be gently lifted by their hind legs to help dislodge the object. Larger dogs can be gently lifted by their rump in a 'wheel-barrow' style movement. Use the heel of your hand to give 4-5 blows between the shoulder blades, but be very careful not to use excessive force. Even if the object has dislodged from your pet's mouth or throat, always take them to the vet to be properly assessed.



# TICKS

## What are the signs?

- 🐾 Vomiting
- 🐾 Difficulty breathing
- 🐾 Weakness of the hindquarters progressing to collapse
- 🐾 Paralysis



## WHAT SHOULD YOU DO?

- 1** Finding ticks early is crucial and you're more likely to find them by touch than by looking. Gently feel all over your pet, including between their toes.
- 2** Remove the tick as soon as possible and try to remove the whole tick. Use tweezers or tick twisters.
- 3** Always take your pet to your vet, even if they appear well, as the residue of the tick's toxin can still cause paralysis. If possible, bring the tick you removed.



# SEIZURES AND CONVULSIONS

## What are the signs?

- 🐾 Sudden and uncontrolled movements
- 🐾 Thrashing legs
- 🐾 Severe tremors
- 🐾 Salivation or drooling
- 🐾 Urination and defecation
- 🐾 Unresponsive
- 🐾 Disorientation
- 🐾 Falling to the floor



## WHAT SHOULD YOU DO?

- 1 While staying safe, protect your pet from injuring themselves during or after the seizure. For example, keep them from falling from a height.
- 2 If you have other pets, remove them from the room or area, as some animals can become aggressive after a seizure.
- 3 Try to take note of how the seizure began, how long it lasted, and the behaviour your pet displayed, so you can share this information with the vet.
- 4 Call your vet and arrange for your pet to be seen as soon as possible.

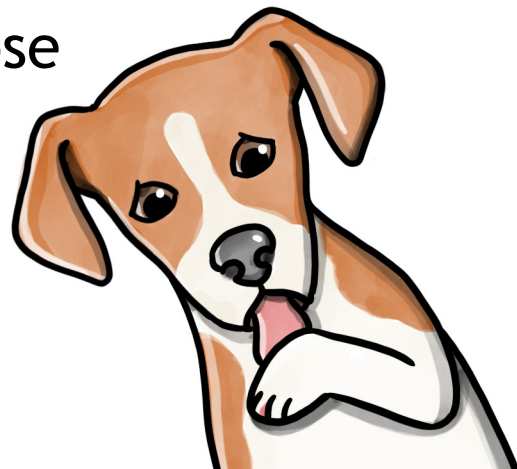


# GRASS SEED WOUND



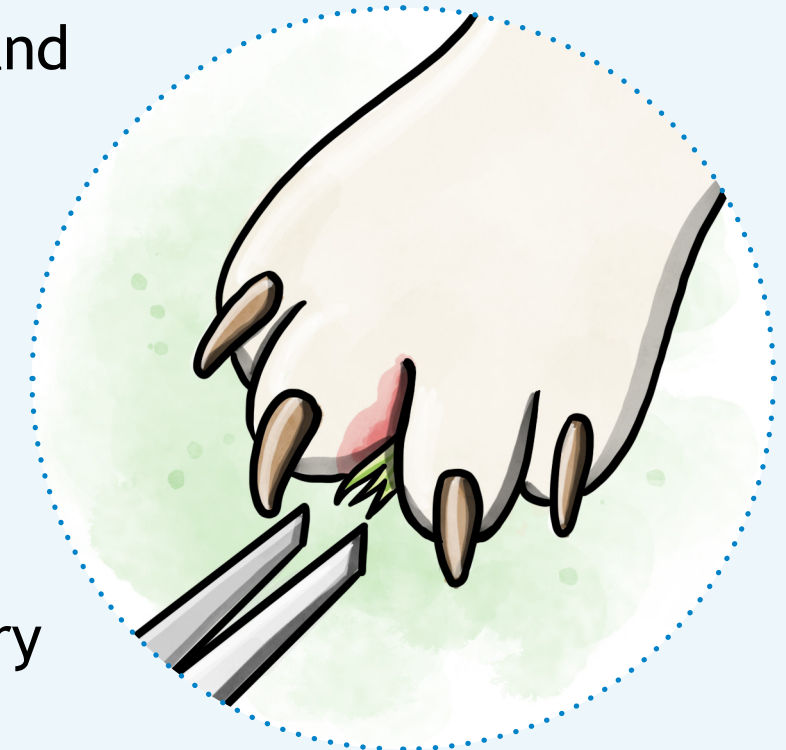
## What are the signs?

- 🐾 Areas of matted fur
- 🐾 Red, sore and tender area on the skin
- 🐾 Excessive head shaking or pawing at ears
- 🐾 Head tilted at an angle
- 🐾 Breathing difficulties or excessive sneezing
- 🐾 Redness and inflammation of the eyes or ears
- 🐾 Discharge from the eyes or nose
- 🐾 Chewing at an area of skin
- 🐾 Licking of paws and limping



## WHAT SHOULD YOU DO?

- 1 If you can see a grass seed protruding from your pet's skin, carefully try to remove it with tweezers (grabbing it at the base closest to the skin). Once removed, your pet will still need to visit their vet for an assessment of the area to make sure all traces of the grass seed have been removed.
- 2 If you suspect there was a grass seed but can no longer see it, it may have embedded itself deep into your pet's skin and they'll need to see your nearest vet.
- 3 If you believe your pet has a grass seed in their ear, eye or mouth, please visit your nearest vet immediately and do not try to remove it yourself.



# HEALTHY VITAL SIGNS

It's important to know what's considered normal and healthy when checking the vital signs of your cat or dog.



Animal	Normal Respiration Rate: Breaths per Minute	Normal Heart Rate: Beats per Minute
Cat	20-30 BPM <i>(cats that are open-mouth breathing need veterinary attention)</i>	110-130 BPM <i>(often 160-200 BPM when being examined or stressed)</i>
Puppy	15-40 BPM	100-200 BPM <i>(newborn &amp; very young puppies will be at higher end)</i>
Toy/Small Dog	15-40 BPM	100-140 BPM
Medium/Large Dog	10-30 BPM <i>(stressed dogs &amp; dogs in pain will often pant – each pant should not be counted as a breath)</i>	80-120 BPM

THANK YOU FOR  
KEEPING YOUR PETS  
SAFE WITH RSPCA'S  
PET FIRST AID GUIDE.

**RSPCA** 

