

Emergencies and First Aid for your Dog

Your puppy could get injuries at any time and knowing how to administer first aid is essential before help arrives.

Brought to you by The Original Dog Bible

Emergency/First Aid Knowledge of first aid is a must for dog owners. Emergencies may require not only that you treat the problem on the spot but also that you stabilize the dog until he can be treated by a veterinarian. Situations that require emergency first aid include allergic reactions, bleeding, burns, choking, fractures, frostbite, heat exhaustion or heatstroke, poisoning, puncture wounds, shock, and spinal injuries.

Allergic Reactions Allergic reactions from insect bites and stings can cause swelling, hives (raised circular areas on the skin), rashes, itching and scratching, or watery eyes. A bite or sting on the face or neck can cause dangerous swelling that closes off the dogs airway. Take your dog to the veterinarian right away if he's having difficulty breathing. For less severe reactions, relieve itching by applying calamine lotion or a paste made of baking soda and water. An ice pack can help reduce pain and swelling.

Bleeding A wound with bright red blood gushing from it indicates that an artery (a main highway for blood flow) is involved. Blood loss can be rapid, so apply firm pressure on the wound immediately, using a clean cloth if possible, but use whatever is available if necessary. The blood from a vein looks dark red and has a slower, more even flow. Again, apply and maintain direct pressure on the wound. Secure a pad or have someone hold it in place, and get the dog to a veterinarian immediately. Do not use a tourniquet to stop bleeding. Direct pressure is more effective, and an improperly used tourniquet can injure the dog.

To deal with less serious bleeding such as from a scratch or scrape, clean the wound with Nolvasan (chlorhexidine), which is available in any drugstore. When the wound stops bleeding, apply antibiotic ointment.

Burns Burns can be caused by heat (fires, stoves, the sun), chemicals, or electricity. Bathe heat burns with cool water or apply a cool compress using gauze or cloth. Never cover a burn with butter or ointment, and don't apply ice to it. Butter and ointments hold the heat in, and ice can damage the skin. If the burn is caused by battery acid or some other chemical, such as toilet bowl cleaner, rinse the area with cool water. Wear gloves to protect your hands.

Chewing on electrical cords can cause burns on a corner of the mouth or on the tongue and palate. Dogs who suffer electrical shock may convulse or lose consciousness. Their respiration may slow, and a severe shock can cause the heart to stop beating. Never touch the dog until the electrical source has been switched off. Don't perform CPR unless the heart has stopped.