

In an emergency situation

- Contact us as soon as possible. Keep our phone number to hand (01256 764771 or out of hours 01252 737555).
- Always phone first whatever the situation, as there may not always be a vet available. Our staff may be able to suggest immediate action you can take.
- Have a pen handy in case another number is given. Treatment can usually be provided more quickly if your pet is taken to the surgery, rather than if you call us out.
- Always bear in mind the safety of yourself and others. Keep calm and assess the situation before acting. Injured animals are frightened and in pain and may try to bite anyone who touches them.
- If there is a risk of biting, put a muzzle on, or wrap tape around the nose and tie behind the ears, unless your pet has difficulty breathing. Small animals may be restrained by putting a thick towel over their heads.
- If you do get bitten, see your doctor.
- Never give human medicines to your pet – many will do more harm than good.
- Do not offer food or drink in case anaesthetic is needed.
- Drive carefully when taking the patient to the surgery.

Is it an emergency?

Sometimes, outside normal hours, it is difficult to decide whether urgent attention is needed. You can always call us and ask for advice. Out of hours we have a dedicated emergency service run by Vets Now. Call 01252 737555

You should phone us if:

- your pet seems weak, is reluctant to get up, or is dull and depressed
 - there is difficulty breathing, or it is noisy or rapid, or if there is continual coughing causing distress
 - there is repeated vomiting, particularly with young or elderly animals. Diarrhoea is less serious, unless severe, bloody or the animal seems weak or unwell.
 - your pet appears to be in severe pain or discomfort
 - your pet is trying to urinate or defecate and is unable to. A blockage of the bladder sometimes occurs and can kill if not treated urgently.
 - there are sudden difficulties with balance
 - a bitch with suckling puppies is agitated, shaking and shivering and will not settle. It could be eclampsia, which needs urgent treatment.
- Feed small amounts of a bland diet (boiled chicken or white fish) and see a vet if it persists for over a day. If it persists, call us for advice.

Road accidents

Prevention is better than cure. Even a well-behaved dog should be kept on a lead anywhere near traffic, including slow moving vehicles. Do not have the collar so loose that the dog can get free.

If the worst happens, beware of other cars. Talk gently to the animal as you approach. Move slowly and avoid making sudden movements. Put a lead on if possible and, if necessary, muzzle before handling.

If your dog can walk, go to the vet, even if there appears to be no pain. There may be internal injuries that are not immediately obvious.

If your pet cannot walk, small ones can be picked up by placing one hand at the front of the chest and the other under the hindquarters.

Improvise a stretcher for larger ones with a coat or a blanket.

If they are paralysed, there may be a spinal injury, so try to find something rigid, such as a board. Slide the patient gently on to this if possible. Cover with a blanket to reduce heat loss.

Then call us immediately for advice.

Bleeding

Keep your pet quiet and calm. Put on a tight bandage. Improvise with a towel or some clothing if necessary. If blood is seeping through, apply another tight layer. Only use a tourniquet as a last resort. For places you cannot bandage, press a pad firmly onto the wound and hold it in place. Get to the vet straight away.

If you have bandaging materials, layer the bandages like this:

- place a non-adhesive dressing on the wound and cover with swabs or cotton bandage
- then place a layer of cotton wool
- cover this with more cotton bandage
- stick the cotton bandage to the hair at the top with surgical tape (not Elastoplast), and cover the whole with adhesive bandage or tape.
- ensure the foot is included in the bandaging or it may swell up. Never leave a bandage on for more than 24 hours.

Broken bones

Deal with serious bleeding but do not apply a splint – it is painful and can cause the bone to break through the skin. Confine the patient for transport to the vet. Smaller animals can be put in a box.

Burns and scalds

Immediately run cold water over these for at least five minutes, then contact us. Do not apply ointments or creams but if there is going to be a delay getting to the vets, you can apply saline soaked dressing to the area. Keep the patient warm.

Poisoning

Try to find packaging from the substance swallowed. Have it with you when you phone the vet. If chewing plants is suspected, try to identify the plant. Call us immediately. Do not make your dog sick unless we instruct you to do so.

Swollen tummy

If this happens suddenly, treat it seriously, especially if the dog is a deep chested breed such as a boxer or mastiff. There may also be gulping, dribbling of saliva and attempts to vomit. It could mean there is a life-threatening twist in the stomach. Phone us immediately – DO NOT DELAY.

Ball stuck in throat

Get to the vets' surgery quickly. Or you may be able to push the ball out by pushing on the throat/neck from the outside. If the dog is turning blue or has collapsed, try the following. You will need someone to help you.

- One person holds the mouth open, while the other reaches inside. Be careful not to get bitten.
- If you cannot pull the ball out, lay the pet on their side.
- Push down suddenly and sharply on the tummy just behind the last rib.
- The person holding the mouth should be ready to grab the ball as it reappears.

Tail injuries

See your vet if your cat's tail is limp, has been trapped in a door, or pulled hard. Such injuries can cause serious bladder problems

Coat contamination

If a substance such as paint or tar has got onto the coat or paws, prevent your pet from licking, as it may be toxic. Use an Elizabethan collar if you have one. You may be able to clip off small areas of affected hair.

Never use turpentine or paint removers. Sometimes, you can remove paint and other substances by bathing your pet in washing up liquid or Swarfega, but if a large area is affected, see the vet.

Heat stroke

If on a warm or hot day your dog is panting heavily and is distressed and especially if the dog is short nosed (e.g. a boxer), overweight or has been playing or exercising, think heatstroke!

Put the dog somewhere cool, preferably in a draught. Wet the coat with tepid water (cold water contracts the blood vessels in the skin and slows heat loss) and phone us. You can offer a small amount of water.

Fits

If your dog is having a fit, do not try to hold or comfort the dog, as this provides stimulation, which may prolong the fit. Darken the room and reduce noise. Remove items, especially anything electrical, away from the dog so they cannot cause injury. Pad furniture with cushions. Call us immediately.

Fights

If your dog or cat seems shocked, dull or distressed after a fight, call us. Otherwise, look at the wound. Puncture wounds to the head or body mean you should consult us right away. Injuries to the limbs may not need immediate treatment, unless severe or very painful, but bring your pet to our surgery within 24 hours, as antibiotics may be required.

Eye injuries

If the eye is bulging out of the socket, apply a wet dressing, prevent rubbing or scratching and call us. If chemicals have got into the eye, flush with water repeatedly (preferably from an eye dropper) and call the vet.

Drowning

Never put yourself at risk by attempting to rescue a dog. Wipe away material from the mouth and nose. Hold the dog upside down by the hind legs until the water has drained out.

Give artificial respiration if breathing has stopped. Even if your pet seems to recover, always see the vet as complications afterwards are common.

Electric shock

If a high voltage supply is involved (non-domestic, for example, power lines), do not approach. Call the police. In the home, turn off power first.

If this is impossible, you may be able to use a dry non-metallic item, like a broom handle, to push the dog away from the power source. If breathing has stopped, give artificial respiration. Call us immediately.

Stings

Pull out the sting below the poison sac, then bathe the area in water or use a solution of bicarbonate of soda if available. Applying ice will help to soothe.

If the sting is in the mouth or throat, contact us as soon as possible as it may swell and interfere with breathing.

Your first aid kit should include:

- bandages – a roll of self-adhesive or crepe bandage (5cm width)
- conforming/open-weave bandages (2.5cm width)
- some non-adhesive absorbent dressings (5cmx 5cm) to cover open wounds
- surgical sticky tape
- a box of cotton wool
- a box of sterile absorbent gauze
- blunt ended scissors, preferably curved
- a thick towel
- a "buster" collar

If you would like any further detail on the information above please contact us on 01256 764 771 or use the contact page on our website.