

Puppy Visit Four: Emergencies and First Aid



Clermont Animal Hospital, Inc.

Common Emergency Situations	38
• Clermont Animal Hospital Inc. Emergency Services	38
• Insect Bites/Stings/Allergic Reactions.....	38
• Bleeding/Cuts.....	38
• Dog Fight Injuries	39
• Traumatic Injuries: Hit by a Car, Gun Shot Wounds, etc.	40
• Accidental Poisoning	40
• Foreign Body Ingestion/Intestinal Obstruction.....	41
• Pyometra (Uterine Infection)	42
• Sudden Coughing/ Object Stuck in Throat	42
• Collapsing Trachea/Laryngeal Paralysis.....	42
• Heat Stroke.....	43
• Severe Illness	43
Over-the-Counter-Remedies	45
• Aspirin (Buffered Only).....	45
• Benedryl® (Diphenhydramine)	45
• Bland Diet	45
• Dextromethoraphan (Cough Suppressant)	46
• Hydrogen Peroxide (3%)	46
• Betadine® (Povidone Iodine 0.75%).....	47
• Pepto-Bismol®	47
• Saline Solution Flush (Physiologic Saline).....	47

Common Emergency Situations

Despite your best efforts to keep your pet safe and healthy, illness and injury may occasionally occur. In emergency situations it is important to know what things you can do to help your pet and how to avoid causing further complications in your pet's condition. Most of all, it is important to remain calm and seek professional help and advice as quickly as possible. This handout is designed to provide you with information on common emergency situations, including how to identify each situation, specific concerns and what you can do to help your pet. There is also a section at the end on over-the-counter remedies that are safe for use in your pet.

Clermont Animal Hospital's Emergency Services

At Clermont Animal Hospital, Inc. we do our best to have a doctor available 24 hours a day, seven days a week for emergency consultation and patient care. **To reach our on-call veterinarian, simply call our office at 513-732-1730.** During regular business hours, our staff will make arrangements for necessary emergency care. It is always better to call in advance so that our staff and doctors can be prepared to offer immediate care upon your arrival.

When you call us after regular hours, our answering service will take your name, telephone number and the details of your pet's problem and then page the on-call doctor. It is important that you stay by the phone and keep the line open until our doctor returns your call. If neither of our doctors is available, our answering service will refer you to one of the local emergency veterinary hospitals or allow you to leave a message for the doctor.

Insect Bites/Stings/Allergic Reactions

Identification: Insect bites/stings usually appear as single or multiple raised pink areas on the skin. These areas may be hot and painful to the touch. Allergic reactions may be more generalized, appearing as bumps or hives over the skin and/or facial swelling. Difficulty breathing and/or collapse may accompany severe allergic reactions.

Specific Concerns:

1. **Stingers**—If the insect stinger is still present, remove it with a pair of tweezers.
2. **Identify Cause**—Whenever an allergic type reaction occurs, it is important to identify the cause (if possible) so that future exposure can be minimized/prevented.
3. **Difficulty breathing**—While most reactions can be treated without difficulty, **if your dog experiences any difficulty breathing, immediate medical attention is necessary.**

How to Help Your Pet: Benedryl® (see Over-the-Counter Remedies) is frequently all that is needed to treat bites, stings and allergic reactions. If the reaction does not clear up with Benedryl, alone, contact our hospital. In cases of breathing difficulty, call our hospital immediately to arrange for emergency care.

Bleeding/Cuts

Identification: Bleeding cut, scrape or other wound

Specific Concerns:

1. **Blood Loss**—Though it is uncommon for a dog to lose enough blood to cause medical problems, severe cuts or cuts that sever a major blood vessel can cause rapid blood loss.

Below are some important tips to help stop or slow blood loss:

- Cover the area with a clean cloth, and apply steady pressure until the bleeding stops or until medical attention is available.
 - If the cut is in an area that can be bandaged, a bandage can be applied. If you are bandaging a leg, use roll gauze or an ace bandage. Be sure to start wrapping at the toes, regardless of how high up the injury is, and wrap upward. Failure to do this will cause the bandage to have a tourniquet effect with swelling below the bandage.
2. **Infection**—Infection will depend on the source of injury and if the wound is exposed and contaminated after injury. In cases of a ruptured abscess (see “Dog Fight Injuries” below) or a wound more than 12 hours old, infection may already be present. If this is the case, milky yellow, greenish or brownish fluid (pus) will usually be draining from the wound. If infection is suspected call our office as soon as possible to arrange for a doctor to evaluate and treat your dog. To help minimize infection in fresh wounds:
 - Flush the wound with a diluted Betadine® solution (see Over-the-Counter Remedies). Peroxide and topical antibiotic ointments are not recommended.
 - Keep the wound clean and dry.
 - Bandage if possible. (See note above about bandaging limbs.)
 3. **Proper Skin Healing**—In cases where the edges of the cut are gaping apart, suturing (stitches) is usually necessary for proper skin healing. Wounds treated within eight hours can often be sutured more easily than older wounds. For this reason, it is best to get veterinary attention as soon as possible.

How to Help Your Pet: Stop bleeding and prevent infection as described above. In cases where the cut is large and skin edges are gaping, immediate veterinary attention is recommended. Minor cuts and scrapes should be seen at the next available appointment time so that damage can be assessed and necessary antibiotics can be started. Buffered aspirin can be given for pain (see Over-the-Counter Remedies).

Dog Fight Injuries

Identification: In many cases, you may witness the dog fight or attack. In other cases, your dog may come in with wounds after contact with another animal. Puncture holes from the canine teeth are the most common wounds, but other gashes and scrapes may occur. In some cases, the puncture wounds are hidden by the hair, and the first indication of an injury is the swelling from an abscess several days later.

Specific Concerns:

1. **Underlying Tissue Damage**—While the bite hole may be small and appear to be a minor injury, dogs often shake when they bite, causing damage to muscles and other tissue in a much larger area. **It is VERY important to have a veterinarian assess the extent of tissue damage, even if the wounds seem small or insignificant.**
2. **Infection**—Due to the large population of bacteria in the attacker’s mouth, infection is very common following bite wound injuries. Even minor abrasions (scrapes) with minimal tissue damage require antibiotics in most cases. If prompt treatment is not sought, infection and/or abscesses can result in devastating complications. If an abscess forms, there is a risk of systemic infection and severe illness. It is also possible for an abscess to rupture outward, creating a gaping hole and a decaying wound.
3. **Internal Injury**—In severe dog bite injuries, particularly in cases where the injured dog has been lifted off the ground by the attacking animal, internal injuries can result. This is difficult to identify at home. Seek immediate veterinary attention.

How to Help Your Pet: If any areas are bleeding, apply pressure with a clean dry cloth until bleeding has stopped. Wounds can be cleaned with dilute Betadine® solution (see Over-the-Counter

Remedies). Peroxide and topical antibiotic ointments are not recommended. Seek immediate veterinary advice and/or attention.

Traumatic Injuries: Hit by a Car, Gun Shot Wounds, etc.

Identification: In some cases, you may actually see your dog struck by a vehicle, shot or otherwise injured. In many cases, however, you may only note signs of injury when your dog returns after running loose. Common signs include limping, gashes/scrapes, gravel/tar imbedded in the skin, and large areas of bruising. In some cases, dogs may be reluctant or unable to move.

Specific Concerns:

1. **Broken Bones**—Fractures are very common in dogs hit by a car and with other high impact traumatic injuries (including gun shot wounds). Limb and pelvic (hip) fractures are the most common. It is important to immobilize your dog as much as possible by putting your dog in a well-padded crate or cage. This will help prevent further damage. If bones are seen jutting out of the skin, it is important to flush this area with saline solution (see Over-the-Counter Remedies) and cover it with a clean cloth or bandage. Flushing with water or antiseptic solutions is not recommended
2. **Neurological Injury**—If the spinal cord has been damaged, your dog may be completely paralyzed or be dragging his or her hind legs. This type of injury is very serious and requires immediate veterinary treatment. Head injuries also will result in neurological signs including a dullness/unresponsiveness, seizures and more subtle neurological changes.
3. **Shock**—Shock is the body's response to traumatic injury. Dogs in shock are usually conscious, but very weak and unable to rise. Their gums are white or grayish, and their breathing is often shallow and rapid. Keep the dog warm and seek immediate medical attention.
4. **Internal Injury/Internal Bleeding**—This is often difficult to identify at home. Any animal with a traumatic injury should be seen by a veterinarian as soon as possible.

How to Help Your Pet: Keep your pet warm and immobilized. Seek immediate veterinary care. If your pet is bleeding, apply pressure with a clean cloth until bleeding stops.

Accidental Poisoning

Identification: The following is a partial list of common poisons ingested by pets:

- Medications (including over-the-counter medicines like Tylenol and Advil)
- Antifreeze
- Chocolate
- Rat poison
- Cleaning products
- Heavy metals (including coins)
- Poisonous plants
- Snail bait
- Illegal drugs

If you have evidence that your pet may have consumed one of these substances, he or she requires immediate medical attention. Each type of poisoning will cause different signs. Watch your pet carefully for changes.

Topical products (products applied to the skin), particularly those for fleas and ticks, can also poison your puppy. Be sure to carefully read labels for age restrictions and application directions on these products. If you notice unusual behavior after treatment with topical products, contact our hospital.

Specific Concerns:

1. **Fast Response Time**—Toxicities treated within two hours after the poison has been taken in have the best prognosis. After the initial two-hour window, the poison has already left the stomach, and absorption has begun. Treatment within the first five hours can help decrease absorption.
2. **Toxin Identification**—To provide your pet with the best care, it is important that our veterinarians know all components of any product your pet has ingested AND approximately how much was ingested. Try to have product labels available when you call seeking emergency care, and bring them with you when you come to Clermont Animal Hospital, Inc.
3. **Topical (skin) Toxins**—If the suspected cause of toxicity is a topical product such as a flea/tick product, it is important to bathe your pet with dish detergent as soon as signs are noticed.

How to Help Your Pet: If you suspect your pet has been accidentally poisoned, contact our on-call doctor immediately. Keep hydrogen peroxide on hand (see Over-the-Counter Remedies) to induce vomiting, but do not use unless directed by a veterinarian or the poison control center. Do not give your pet anything to eat or drink.

Foreign Body Ingestion/Intestinal Obstruction

Identification: If you see your pet eat something that he or she shouldn't, or if you find evidence of chewed objects, contact us at Clermont Animal Hospital, Inc. String, thread, ribbon and rubber bands are commonly eaten by dogs. In some cases, owners are unaware that this has occurred.

If you see your pet eat something that he or she shouldn't or find evidence of chewed objects, contact our office. In some cases, owners are unaware that this has occurred. Objects may pass without a problem, but in other cases, vomiting and diarrhea can occur. If an obstruction (blockage) is present, severe vomiting and/or diarrhea will occur. Any case of repeated vomiting should be treated as a suspect case of intestinal obstruction especially if your dog is not eating or drinking. Seek emergency care. If severe diarrhea is noted without vomiting, a large bowel obstruction may be present.

Specific Concerns:

1. **Intestinal Rupture**—Untreated intestinal obstructions can often lead to the death of intestinal tissue and the rupture of intestinal contents into the abdomen. For this reason, prompt diagnosis and emergency surgery are required in order to save your pet's life.
2. **Abdominal Pain**—Your pet's belly may be very painful with this condition. Avoid putting pressure on the belly, particularly when lifting your animal.

How to Help Your Pet: If your pet is vomiting, withhold all food and water. If vomiting continues, contact our on-call doctor immediately. Be sure to tell our doctor about anything your dog may have ingested that could be causing this problem. If vomiting stops when food and water are withheld, wait 12 hours, then gradually introduce water followed by small servings of a bland diet (see Over-the-Counter Remedies). If vomiting starts again, contact our hospital.

Pyometra (Uterine Infection)

Identification: Pyometra is the medical term for a life-threatening uterine infection. Unspayed females are at risk for this condition. Pyometra is most common within the three months following the last heat. Dogs with this condition will act be lethargic (sluggish), lose their appetite and/or vomit. They may also drink and urinate more and/or have a vaginal discharge.

Specific Concerns:

1. **Uterine Rupture**—If the uterus becomes too full of pus, it will rupture into the abdomen. This is frequently deadly. For this reason, prompt diagnosis and emergency surgery are required in order to save your pet’s life.
2. **Kidney Damage**—The toxins associated with bacteria causing pyometra can lead to permanent kidney damage.

How to Help Your Pet: If your female dog has not been spayed and is suddenly acting ill and drinking more water, **seek immediate veterinary care**. Do not feed your dog, as emergency surgery may be necessary.

Sudden Coughing/ Object Stuck in Throat

Identification: Coughing can occur for many reasons, including kennel cough, tracheal (wind pipe) irritation from an inhaled or swallowed object, pneumonia or heart-related problems. If there is truly an object “stuck” in your dog’s throat, the coughing will be continuous, not intermittent or sporadic. Often an obstruction is associated with difficulty breathing or with pawing at the muzzle. Usually a sudden cough is due to tracheal irritation and is intermittent and not associated with respiratory distress or obstruction.

Specific Concerns:

1. Throat irritation can cause a cough, but coughing can make throat irritation worse, leading to continued coughing. It is often necessary to use medication to break the cycle.
2. Dextromethorphan, the active ingredient in most human cough remedies can be used to break the cough cycle (see Over-the-Counter Remedies).
3. Cough medication should not be used if pneumonia or heart problems are suspected, as it can worsen these conditions. Productive coughs, which are coughs that bring up mucus, should not be suppressed. If in doubt, consult one of our doctors before giving medication for cough.
4. If a cough persists for more than 48 hours or is accompanied by difficulty breathing, fever, decreased appetite or lethargy, a veterinary evaluation is recommended as it may be a sign of a more serious problem

How to Help Your Pet: If you suspect an object is stuck in your dog’s throat, contact our hospital immediately. If you suspect that the cough is related to tracheal irritation, try to calm your dog. Offering your dog a drink of water may help in some cases. If the cough continues or recurs, try administering a dose of dextromethorphan. Call our hospital if cough continues or is accompanied by other signs.

Collapsing Trachea/Laryngeal Paralysis

Identification: A collapsing trachea is most common in small breeds of dogs. Laryngeal paralysis is most common in large breed dogs. In both conditions, dogs will have sudden difficulty breathing, particularly after exercise, excitement or overheating. If your dog has a collapsing trachea, he or she will usually have a “goose honk” cough.

Specific Concerns:

1. **Hyperthermia (Overheating)**—Both conditions cause your dog’s temperature to increase to dangerous levels. Your dog may feel hot to the touch or have reddened skin. It is important to cool your dog down with water and/or ice if this occurs.
2. **Airway Obstruction (Blockage)**—Both of these conditions can result in severe airway obstruction, limiting the air getting into your dog’s lungs. Emergency treatment is important to help your pet breathe.
3. **Cyclic Signs**—Because panic from the inability to breathe and the high body temperature worsen the underlying condition, a deadly cycle can be created. Medical attention is needed to break this cycle. Cool your pet, and restore calm normal breathing.

How to Help Your Pet: Don’t panic! Your pet will sense your anxiety, and it will cause his or her condition to worsen. Stay calm. Do anything you can to calm your pet. Cool your pet down if he or she is hot. Monitor temperature using a rectal thermometer, and stop the cooling process as soon as the temperature reaches 103 degrees (additional cooling after this point will drop your pet’s temperature too low). Call our hospital immediately.

Heat Stroke

Identification: A rectal temperature of greater than 104 degrees Fahrenheit after heat exposure may indicate overheating (normal temperature is 100-102.5). In severe cases of heat stroke, the temperature may be over 107 degrees. Excessive panting or salivation, listlessness, muscle tremors, vomiting, diarrhea and/or collapse may occur in cases of overheating. Common causes include animals shut in hot cars, dogs tied outside without shade on hot days or dogs who exercise during hot weather. Dogs with short noses (pugs, bulldogs, etc.) are particularly sensitive to heat.

Specific Concerns:

1. **DIC**—DIC is a condition in which the blood no longer clots properly. This occurs in some patients with heat stroke. This condition is often fatal, causing bleeding out of all body openings as well as bleeding into the lungs and the skin (petichiae).
2. **Seizures**—When the brain overheats, seizures are common. Without prompt treatment, these can cause permanent brain damage.
3. **Abnormal Heart Rhythms**—Heat stroke can cause potentially deadly changes in your dog’s heart rhythm.

How to Help Your Pet: It is important to cool your pet as quickly as possible. Use a garden hose and/or ice packs to help bring your pet’s temperature down. Monitor temperature using a rectal thermometer, and stop the cooling process as soon as the temperature reaches 103 degrees (additional cooling after this point will drop your pet’s temperature too low). Call our hospital immediately—additional treatment may be necessary in moderate to severe cases. Avoid any further exposure to heat.

Severe Illness

Identification: Signs will vary with the type of illness. The following signs may warrant emergency attention. Please contact our hospital if any of these signs are noted:

- Severe lethargy/inability to rise
- Repeated vomiting
- Severe diarrhea
- Seizures
- Sudden collapse
- Inability to urinate
- Inability to move limb(s)
- Difficulty breathing
- Severe pain.

Specific Concerns: Will vary with illness.

How to Help Your Pet: Contact our hospital as soon as any signs are noted. Keep your pet warm and calm. Follow any advice given by our doctors regarding your pet's particular condition.



Over-the-Counter-Remedies

Aspirin (Buffered only)

Usages: Aspirin can be used in dogs and dogs pretty for most of the same reasons as in people. It provides minor pain relief and decreases fever and inflammation. Aspirin can be used for mild and intermittent arthritis, pain relief following injury, or to treat low-grade fevers.

Dosage:

Dogs Weighing:

- 5-15 pounds 1 baby aspirin twice a day
- 15-30 pounds ½ adult aspirin OR 2 baby aspirin twice a day
- 30-50 pounds ¾ adult aspirin OR 3 baby aspirin twice a day
- More than 50 pounds 1 adult aspirin twice a day

Cats: Do NOT use unless directed by a veterinarian

Precautions/Side Effects:

1. Always give with food.
2. Never use at full dose for more than three days (more than one treatment in dogs) without consulting our hospital. Long-term use of this product in dogs and dogs can cause stomach ulceration.
3. Do not use if your pet is currently on Rimadyl, Deramax or prednisone
4. Do not use in cats unless directed by a veterinarian
5. ONLY use buffered aspirin products (non-buffered products can cause stomach ulceration)
6. Do **NOT** substitute Tylenol® or Advil®—These are toxic to dogs and cats.

Benedryl® (Diphenhydramine)

Usages: Benedryl® can be used for allergic reactions including hives, insect stings and mild skin allergies and in mild cases of motion sickness.

Dosage:

Dogs and Cats

- 1 - 2 mg/pound every 8-12 hours

Precautions/Side Effects:

1. It may cause sleepiness/lethargy.
2. If breathing difficulty accompanies an allergic reaction, call our hospital before using Benedryl®.

Bland Diet

Usage: A bland diet can be used in any dog (or cat) recovering from vomiting, diarrhea or other causes of stomach/intestinal upset.

Recipe:

- 3 parts boiled white rice
- 1 part browned hamburger (rinsed) OR boiled chicken (no skin/bones) OR cottage cheese

- Mix ingredients together. Feed as small, frequent meals. Refrigerate the unused portion in an airtight container.

****Note**** This recipe can be easily made in large batches by boiling lean hamburger or cut up chicken while boiling the rice in the same pot. This mixture can also be frozen.

Precautions/Side Effects:

1. This is not a nutritionally balanced diet. It is intended for short-term use only.
 2. When switching back to regular food, make the transition over a three to five-day period, slowly adding in the original diet and decreasing the bland diet.
 3. If vomiting or diarrhea occurs while your pet is eating this diet, contact our hospital.
-

Dextromethoraphan (Active ingredient in cough suppressants such as Robitussin DM®)

Usages: Dextromethoraphan can be used for cough suppression for dry, hacking coughs due to tracheal (wind pipe) irritation or mild kennel cough.

Dosage:

- **Dogs and cats under 40 pounds** 5mg every four hours
- **Dogs over 40 pounds** 10mg every four hours

Precautions/Side Effects:

1. Do not use if cough is soft, moist or productive or if a fever is present except as recommend by a veterinarian.
 2. Do not use for coughs associated with pneumonia or heart failure, as this medication can worsen those conditions.
 3. Do not use for more than 48 hours without consulting a veterinarian. A cough may be a sign of a more serious underlying disease.
 4. If kennel cough is suspected, isolate the dog from other dogs and seek veterinary care.
-

Hydrogen Peroxide (3%)

Usages: Induce vomiting in cases of accidental poisoning (Dogs only!). It is also good for cleaning blood and tear stains off of fur.

Dosage:

- **Dogs--** ½ - 1 tsp. Per 5 pounds; maximum of 2 Tbs. by mouth to induce vomiting. If vomiting does not occur within 15 minutes, give ¼ dose ONCE ONLY.
- **Cats—**Do not use orally (only on the skin/fur for blood staining).

Precautions/Side Effects:

1. Hydrogen Peroxide frequently causes upset stomach, decreased appetite and diarrhea following the initial vomiting episode.
 2. Consult our veterinarians or the local poison control center before using to induce vomiting. Do not induce vomiting if the toxin ingested is an acid, base or petroleum-based product.
 3. Do not give more than two doses—one full dose and one ¼ dose—or severe GI complications may result.
 4. Do not use in dogs to induce vomiting.
 5. Not recommended for cleaning open wounds because it decreases wound healing.
-

Betadine® (Povidone Iodine Solution 0.75%)

Usages: Betadine® solution can be used to clean or disinfect superficial and shallow wounds, abrasions (scrapes) and abscess sites.

Dosage: Dilute one part iodine in nine parts water. For more concentrated formulations, more water will be necessary to achieve proper dilution. The diluted solution should be approximately the color of weak tea.

Precautions/Side Effects:

1. This product will stain clothes, light colored fur and furniture.
 2. Any wound that breaks through all layers of the skin should be evaluated by a veterinarian. Oral antibiotic therapy and/or suturing (stitches) may be necessary.
-

Pepto-Bismol® (liquid only)

Usage: For upset stomach and diarrhea

Dosage:

- **Dogs**— $\frac{1}{4}$ - 1 tsp. per 10 pounds; maximum. 2 Tbs. daily
- **Cats**—Do not use this product for cats.

Precautions/Side Effects:

1. Pepto Bismol® may cause stool to be dark brown or black, which is not a medical concern. Please inform our hospital if you are using this product so that it is not confused with melena (blood in the stool).
 2. Do not use tablets for dogs—they are not adequately digested to provide beneficial effects.
 3. Dogs do not like the taste of this product. Administer in an easy-to-clean area.
 4. Do not use for cats.
-

Saline Solution Flush (Physiologic Saline)

Usages: Saline solution can be used to flush deep wounds, to cleanse exposed bones, and to flush irritants out of eyes.

Sources: Many contact solutions for soft contact lenses are Physiologic Saline. You may also find it in the first aid section of the pharmacy as a wound flush solution.

Precautions/Side Effects:

1. Be sure to use sterile physiologic (0.9% NaCl) saline solution.
2. Dogs may become chilled from copious flushing. Be sure to dry your dog and keep him/her warm to prevent this.

Clermont Animal Hospital, Inc.
1404 Old State Route 74
Batavia, Ohio
513-732-1730
www.ClermontAnimal.net

© Clermont Animal Hospital, Inc. 2009