



American Red Cross

Greater Cleveland Chapter

First Aid for Pets



Create a pet first aid kit

Basic supplies should include gauze pads, gauze roll/ bandages, roll of cloth, tweezers, thermometer, hydrogen peroxide, antibiotic ointment, cotton swabs, instant cold pack, rags/ rubber tubing for tourniquet and a First Aid book.

Handling an injured animal

Any animal injured in pain can bite or scratch you. Even the friendliest of pets must be handled with care for the safety, of all involved. If you are accidentally bitten or scratched, seek medical attention. Both dog and cat bites can become infected quickly.

Food and water requirement

Animals (except birds), like people, can go extended periods of time without food, but can only last a couple of days, at the most, without water.



Basic First Aid Procedures

All of the following situations require immediate veterinary care.

Fractures

- Muzzle animal
- Gently lay animal on a board, wooden door, tarp, etc. padded with blankets.
- Secure animal to the support.
- Do not attempt to set the fracture.
- If a limb is broken, wrap the leg in cotton padding, then wrap with a magazine, rolled newspaper, towel or two sticks. Splint should extend one joint above the fracture and one joint below. Secure with tape. Make sure wrap does not constrict blood flow.
- If the spine, ribs, hips, etc. appears injured or broken, gently place the animal on the stretcher and immobilize it if possible.



Bleeding (external)

- Muzzle animal
- Press thick gauze pad over wound. Hold firmly until clotting occurs.
- If bleeding is severe, apply a tourniquet between the wound and the heart.
- Loosen tourniquet for 20 seconds every 15-20 minutes.
- A tourniquet is dangerous and should only be used in life-threatening hemorrhaging of a limb. It may result in amputation or disability of the limb.

Bleeding (internal)

- Symptoms: bleeding from the nose, mouth, rectum, coughing blood; blood in urine; pale gums; collapsing; rapid or weak pulse
- Keep animal as warm and quiet as possible.

Burns

- Chemical
 - Muzzle animal
 - Flush immediately with large quantities of cold water
- Severe
 - Muzzle animal
 - Quickly apply ice water compresses
 - Treat for shock if necessary



Shock

- Symptoms: weak pulse; shallow breathing; nervousness; dazed appearance
- Often accompanies severe injury or extreme fright
- Keep animal restrained, quiet and warm
- If unconscious, keep head level with rest of body



For more information contact:



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**or visit:
www.redcross-cleveland.org**



Restraint Methods

If your animal is injured, you must restrain him/her for your safety as well as your pet's. Muzzle your pet to restrain it unless it is unconscious, has difficulty breathing or has a mouth injury.

Dogs -- Muzzles

- Speak and move calmly and quietly.
- Have someone restrain the dog with a leash.
- Approach dog from the side and behind its head; do not attempt to put muzzle from the front.
- Quickly slip a nylon or wire cage muzzle over nose, secure snugly behind ears.
- If a muzzle is not available, you can make one from a strip of gauze, rag, necktie, belt or rope about 3 feet long.

Cats -- Muzzles

- Speak and move calmly and quietly.
- Have someone restrain the cat by holding the scruff of its neck firmly. This does not hurt the cat; it just prevents him/her from moving.
- Working from behind the cat, quickly slip a nylon muzzle over the cat's face. The muzzle will cover most of his/her face, including the eyes.

- Secure snugly behind head.
- If you are alone, scruff the cat with one hand and put the muzzle over the cat's face with the other. Slide both hands along muzzle straps and secure behind the head.
- If a muzzle is not available, one can be made with a rag or a strip of gauze.



Basic First Aid for Birds

If bleeding, fractures, or puncture wounds occur, immediately contact a veterinarian.

Fractures

Restrain bird by wrapping it in a towel or slipping it into a sock with the toe cut out. If the leg looks wounded then apply a splint with two pieces of adhesive tape placed perpendicular to leg across break site.

Bleeding

Press finger over removal site until bleeding stops if it appears as though a feather is broken. If the bird has a broken nail then apply pressure to site with finger until bleeding decreases.

Restraints

Carefully wrap the bird in a towel then gently folding his/her wings against the body. Gloves are not recommended when handling bigger birds. They reduce your dexterity and strong beaks can easily penetrate them.