



First Aid for Your Dog



Summertime is a great time to get outside with your dog. Seeing your dog rolling in the grass, swimming in the lake, or just playing in the backyard can bring so much joy!

However, accidents can happen -- and they can happen to your pet as well. Being prepared for a medical emergency is vital -- not only for yourself but for your dog, too.

Many of the items that you normally carry in your first aid kit can work with your pet; however, there are some specific items that are better used for dogs. In addition to carrying these items with you, it is highly advised that you also practice these skills at home. Trying to administer first aid to a frightened, injured dog in the backcountry is best if practiced first!

Keep in mind: ALWAYS hike responsibly with your dog. Respect trail signs, use a leash, and always clean up after your pup!

In this article, I will go over some of the common injuries that can occur with Fido, how to fix them, and items to carry in your First Aid Kit for Dogs.

Cut or abraded paws. This type of injury is pretty straightforward and can happen to your dog when hiking over rough terrain or even on hot surfaces. Make sure the dog is calm and if necessary, leash and muzzle the dog. Even the friendliest dogs may attempt to bite if they become frightened.

Clean the paw or laceration with water and look for any foreign objects. Remove with tweezers if found. If you have styptic swabs, use them to disinfect the area and help control bleeding. If actively bleeding, apply pressure with a clean bandage. If bleeding cannot be controlled, take to the vet immediately.

Then, wrap the paw in clean gauze pads and hold together with self-sticking wrap sometimes called vet wrap. Try not to wrap too tight. Monitor for infection. If available, apply a bandage infused with Manuka honey to help promote healing.

Bee Stings: Bee stings are fairly common for dogs in the summer time. Veterinarians recommend giving dogs Benadryl if they have been stung and there is swelling. Check with your vet for dosage, but a common rule of thumb is 1-2 mg per pound every 8 hours if necessary. **Never** give a dog over-the-counter pain pills of any kind!! Acetaminophen (Tylenol) is extremely toxic to the liver and can be fatal! No aspirin either!

Heat Exhaustion: Dogs cannot tell us what hurts on them or when they are sick, so it is up to us as responsible dog owners to monitor our dogs during the heat. If your dog is panting excessively, and seems to be moving slowly and lethargically, make sure and cool them off rapidly. Check their belly to see if it feels hot and check their ears for heat as well. Get the dog to a stream if possible and cool them off. You can also cool them off with wet towels and get them in the shade. Let them rest and get them water. Left untreated, heat exhaustion can be life-threatening.

Porcupine Quills: Ouch!! Many dogs snoop at animals and if they get hit with porcupine quills, it can be very painful. Again, calm the dog down. If there are only a few quills and they are not near the eyes, pull them firmly out with pliers on your multi-tool. DO NOT break off the quills. If you cannot remove them, take the dog to the vet.

Skunk Spray: Oh boy! This is a nasty and very smelly situation! First check that no spray got into your dog's eyes -- if so, flush with saline wash or water. Next, it's time for Fido to get a de-skunking bath. The formula used here:

- 1 quart 3% hydrogen peroxide
- 1/4 cup baking soda
- 1 tsp of liquid dishwashing soap

Using rubber gloves, wet the dog's fur and wash and lather thoroughly with the formula. Rinse, rinse, rinse, and rinse again. Do not leave the formula on too long as the peroxide may bleach the dog's fur. If you do not have all of those ingredients, use vinegar distilled with water. Although not as effective, the vinegar solution will help neutralize the smell a little bit.

Snakebites: First, try and remain calm! And do not get in the way of the snake! Try and identify the snake if you can. Do not try and cut and suck the venom out -- this does not work

and you risk infection, too.

What to do:

Wash the bite site to help prevent infection.

If bitten on a leg, wrap a constricting band on the affected limb snugly at a level just above the bite wound (on the body side of the wound). This band could be fashioned from a shirtsleeve or other fabric and should be snug but not excessively tight. The compression around the limb will slow the spread of the venom.

Keep the dog as calm as can be and make your way to the vet. Most vets will have anti-venom.

Here are the basic items that you should carry for a pet first aid kit.

- *Field Guide to Dog First Aid* by Randy Acker, DVM
- Gauze pads (various sizes)
- Vet wrap
- Tweezers
- Emergency blanket
- Muzzle
- Gloves
- Scissors with blunt ends
- Saline wash
- Styptic swabs
- Alcohol wipes
- Benadryl tablets
- Bandages with Manuka honey (antibiotic, healing)
- Multi-tool

These are the basics of any pet first aid kit. If you would like to purchase a pre-made one, there are several to choose from available on Amazon or at your local sporting good store. Always check with your vet if your pet is on medication or has special needs.

Be prepared, stay safe and have fun with Fido this summer!

Source URL: <http://basmati.com/2017/08/09/first-aid-your-dog>