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# COMPANION ANIMAL NEWSLETTER

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OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY  
College of Veterinary Medicine  
Stillwater, OK 74078

Winter 2004

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## FIRST AID FOR PETS

Owners have a responsibility to learn first aid techniques that may be necessary to save their pet's life.

The following is a revised copy of the power point presentation given by

Dr. Mary Bowles at the September College of Veterinary Medicine Pet Care Lecture Series

### FIRST AID KIT

Pet Owners should have a first aid kit kept in an unlocked, clearly labeled container that is easy to retrieve but out of reach of children. The following is a checklist of supplies:

- ❖ Information card
- ❖ Veterinary emergency phone number
- ❖ Poison control number (1-800-548-2425)
- ❖ Rabies tag number/microchip identification
- ❖ Pet's baseline temperature and weight
- ❖ Commercial muzzle suitable for your pet or roll of gauze
- ❖ Rectal thermometer
- ❖ Lubricants
- ❖ Needle-nose pliers
- ❖ Blunt-tipped tweezers
- ❖ Clean washcloth
- ❖ Antiseptic liquid soap
- ❖ Antiseptic solution
- ❖ Cotton balls
- ❖ Sterile clean contact lens solution (saline)
- ❖ Clean towel or blanket
- ❖ Needle-less syringe or eyedropper
- ❖ Electric clippers
- ❖ Duct tape
- ❖ Bandaging materials
- ❖ Sterile gauze pads
- ❖ Telfa pads
- ❖ 1-2" rolls of stretchable & non-stretchable gauze
- ❖ Elastic bandage
- ❖ Blunt scissors
- ❖ Bubble wrap
- ❖ Antibiotic ointment
- ❖ Cold pack/hot pack materials
- ❖ Styptic powder



- ❖ Karo syrup or honey
- ❖ Activated charcoal preparation
- ❖ 3% hydrogen peroxide
- ❖ Syrup of ipecac
- ❖ Kao-pectate

**CONSULT YOUR VETERINARIAN about proper use of the following medications:**

- ❖ *Buffered aspirin*
- ❖ *Antihistamine*

### EMERGENCY SITUATIONS

Contact your veterinarian immediately, if your pet:

- ❖ Stops breathing
- ❖ Has no detectable heartbeat
- ❖ Has lost consciousness
- ❖ Has signs of shock
- ❖ Is experiencing notable difficulty breathing
- ❖ Has a chest puncture or gaping wound
- ❖ Has an extremely elevated or decreased body temperature
- ❖ Has been poisoned or is suffering a severe reaction to venom, stings, or medication
- ❖ Experiences repetitive seizures
- ❖ Has been hit by a vehicle
- ❖ Has obvious difficulty urinating
- ❖ Experiences severe bleeding
- ❖ Has a painful, distended abdomen
- ❖ Collapses
- ❖ Has experienced drowning
- ❖ Has experienced electrical shock
- ❖ Has an eye out of the socket
- ❖ Has experienced a gunshot wound
- ❖ Has suffered a severe head injury
- ❖ Has suffered from smoke inhalation

## **KNOW HOW TO MONITOR THE FOLLOWING VITAL SIGNS ON YOUR PETS**

Have your veterinarian demonstrate:

- ❖ Temperature--Normal body temperature in the dog and cat usually ranges from 99° F to 102.5° F
- ❖ Color of gums
- ❖ Gums should be obviously pink in color
- ❖ Hydration
- ❖ When a pet is well hydrated, the skin at the base of the neck should spring back immediately when grasped and subsequently released.
- ❖ Heart rate and pulse
- ❖ Normal heart rate and pulse in the cat may range from 120 – 240 BPM
- ❖ Normal heart rate and pulse in the dog may range from 70 – 180 BPM
- ❖ Respiration rate
- ❖ Normal respiration rate in the dog and cat is usually 15 – 30 breaths/minute
- ❖ Responsiveness
- ❖ Your pet should be alert and respond readily to outside stimulation

## **LEARN HOW TO RECOGNIZE SIGNS OF SHOCK WHICH CAN OCCUR WHEN A PET SUSTAINS INJURIES**

- ❖ Shock is a life-threatening situation, which develops when the body does not get enough oxygen.
- ❖ Pets in shock will be suddenly weak, have difficulty standing, and be relatively unaware of their surroundings.
- ❖ Pets in shock usually have pale gums, a rapid heart rate, and a low body temperature

### **Treatment of injuries related to shock:**

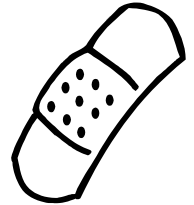
- ❖ Perform CPR if the pet is not breathing and the heart is not beating
- ❖ Apply pressure to bleeding wounds
- ❖ Cover your pet with a towel or blanket
- ❖ Transport your pet to the veterinarian on a rigid surface, towel, or blanket

## **BASIC FIRST AID FOR WOUNDS**

- ❖ Muzzle or otherwise restrain your pet prior to manipulating the wound
- ❖ Apply pressure to bleeding wounds
- ❖ Trim the hair around the wound with scissors or clippers
- ❖ Flush the wound with cool water or sterile contact lens (saline) solution
- ❖ Apply dilute antiseptic solution with a spray bottle
- ❖ Dry the wound gently with gauze pads

## **PURPOSE OF BANDAGING**

- ❖ Keep wounds dry
- ❖ Absorb wound seepage
- ❖ Control bleeding with mild pressure
- ❖ Keep your pet from licking or chewing the injury
- ❖ Shield the wound from contamination



## **BANDAGE PITFALLS**

- ❖ Bandages must be changed every day or two.
- ❖ Bandages must be kept clean and dry.
- ❖ Swelling above or below the bandage indicates the bandage is too tight.
- ❖ If your pet licks or chews the bandage excessively or the bandaged area begins to smell bad, you should remove the bandage immediately and check the wound

## **HOW TO HANDLE A FRACTURE EMERGENCY**

- ❖ If the fracture has occurred recently, observe your pet for signs of shock.
- ❖ Do not move exposed bone. Cover it with a saline-soaked clean gauze pad, Telfa pad, or clean cloth.
- ❖ Apply direct pressure to bleeding wounds
- ❖ For fractures of the lower limb you may try to splint the limb above and below the fracture by wrapping the leg in a clean cloth followed by a rolled magazine or bubble wrap and then elastic bandage, panty hose, or plastic wrap. Once fracture is stabilized transport to veterinarian.

## POISONING

This emergency requires prompt and proper first aid. Attempt to determine what poison was involved, and read and administer the antidote on the container of the poison. Even if antidote is administered, call your veterinarian or the National Poison Control Center and follow their instructions. Prevent poisoning by keeping poisonous substances like the following out of reach of children and pets:

- ❖ Antifreeze
- ❖ Chocolate
- ❖ Raisins or grapes
- ❖ Household cleaners
- ❖ Insecticides
- ❖ Medications
- ❖ Rodenticides
- ❖ Plants
  - ❖ Azaleas
  - ❖ Dieffenbachia
  - ❖ English ivy
  - ❖ Daffodils
  - ❖ Tulips
  - ❖ Holly
  - ❖ Lillies
  - ❖ Rhubarb



### GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR CONTACT WITH POISONS

- ❖ If the poison is topical, bathe the pet as soon as possible with dishwashing detergent and rinse thoroughly.
- ❖ If ingested within the last two hours and the pet is fully conscious, feed him a small meal and then make him vomit by administering syrup of ipecac, salt water, or hydrogen peroxide by mouth. Avoid inducing vomiting with caustic agents like bleach and ammonia or petroleum products.
- ❖ Take the poison container to your veterinarian with the pet when available.
- ❖ If your pet is coated with motor oil, tar, or paint, wear gloves and rub the affected areas with mineral oil or vegetable oil. Then dust the area with

cornmeal, flour, or cornstarch, and then wash away with dishwashing liquid.

- ❖ Try to administer activated charcoal if longer than two hours since poison ingestion and the poison is not caustic or petroleum-based.

### HOW TO RESPOND TO A PET THAT VOMITS

- ❖ Withhold food from your pet for 24 hours
- ❖ Offer ice cubes for water
- ❖ May give Pepto-Bismol to dogs- ½ - 1 tsp/5 lbs. (maximum 2tbsp) up to 3X/day  
*Do not give cats Pepto-Bismol without consulting your veterinarian!*
- ❖ Famotidine (Pepcid AC)- 5 mg/10 lbs 1 – 2 X daily
- ❖ May want to treat cats for hairballs by lubricants or diet
- ❖ If vomit contains blood, occurs frequently or animal seems to be in pain or showing other signs of illness contact you veterinarian.

### HEAT PROSTRATION (HEAT STROKE)

- ❖ Dogs with flat, pushed-in faces are more at risk for heatstroke.
- ❖ Heatstroke victims may collapse, go into shock, develop vomiting and diarrhea, develop a bloody nose, experience seizures or lapse into a coma.
- ❖ Temperatures above 104° F may precipitate life-threatening problems.

### FIRST AID FOR HEAT STROKE

- ❖ Transport the pet to a cool environment
- ❖ Take the pet's temperature when possible
- ❖ Soak the pet in cool water
- ❖ Apply ice to the groin and armpits
- ❖ Douse the footpads liberally with alcohol
- ❖ Transport your pet to the veterinarian in a cool vehicle
- ❖ If your pet is alert, offer the pet cool water to drink

#### From the Editor:

If you have any comments about this newsletter or if you have recently moved or know of someone who would enjoy this newsletter, please give us name and current address. You may contact us (405) 744-7672 or [Ann4@okstate.edu](mailto:Ann4@okstate.edu)

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The OSU CVM Pet Care Seminar Series has been very successful this year and will continue this monthly seminar in Spring 2005. Seminars are on the 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday of each month, 7:00 p.m. on the campus of Oklahoma State University, McElroy Hall. Scheduled Spring 2004 presentations are:

February 1	Fitness for Pets	John Scheiderer, DVM
March 1	Pet Hip Dysplasia	Mark Rochat, DVM
April 5	Common Small Animal Eye Problems	Margi Gilmore, DVM
May 3	Small Animal Medicine	Mike Lorenz, DVM

Seminars are free and open to the public. If you would like to receive e-mail notification of these seminars, contact our office at (405) 744-7672 or email - [Ann4@okstate.edu](mailto:Ann4@okstate.edu)

The Christmas season is a fun and exciting time of year. Christmas lights, ornaments, and plants appear in the home and are very attractive to pets. If a pet chews and/or swallows some of these items, health problems such as gastrointestinal obstruction, perforation or poisoning can result. Prevention is the key to keeping your pets safe. Keep all decorations including candles and plants out of reach of children and pets. As always, store seasonal chocolate and alcoholic beverages beyond your pet's reach. If you suspect your pet has consumed a substance that could cause potential injury, contact your veterinarian. The Christmas season can be a happy time for the family but be sure to take proper safety precautions for all your pets.

*We would like to wish everyone a holiday filled with peace, happiness and joy. Be safe in your travels to visit family and friends.*

