

ProTrainings.uk[®]

PET FIRST AID STUDENT MANUAL

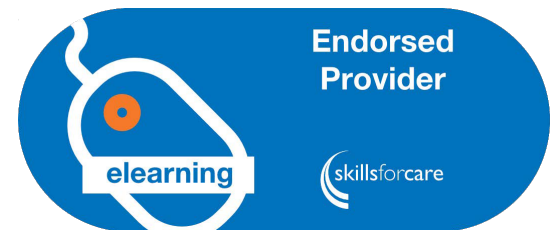
VERSION 8.4



Endorsed, CPD Certified and ISO Standards

All ProTrainings classroom and online qualifications are endorsed through an Awarding Organisation Regulated by Ofqual, through the Skills for Care Scheme with the highest level of recognition and are approved through the CPD Standards services for CPD certification.

ProTrainings: Additional quality at an affordable price.



This is the highest standard of recognised endorsement and only organisations who have a proven history of continued success in making a difference in the training industry can be awarded the Centre of Excellence endorsement. ProTrainings proudly announce that we have received this endorsement for continuous professional training delivery.

As a recognised Skills for Care provider who is already endorsed for delivering training through digital e-learning, classroom and blended formats, this enhanced Centre of Excellence endorsement will take our credibility and quality of training to an advanced state of recognition. But what does this new Centre of Excellence endorsement mean?

The Centre of Excellence status means that we have been able to consistently demonstrate exemplary commitment to meeting the needs of learners in the adult social care sector. This meant we needed to comply with the social model of care and be able to measure the impact of provision on the lives of people who use these services.

We embarked on this provision to prove how consistent ProTrainings services are, to test whether we are meeting a high standard, to evolve, adapt and improve our provision and to place ourselves amongst a small selection of companies who are a Skills for Care Centre of Excellence.

Gaining this accolade has resulted in receiving a designation as a 'Centre of Excellence in Adult Social Care and Learning and Development' and we do not plan on stopping our standards here. We will continue to offer the finest services so that lives are rewarded through the training and services we provide.

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ProTrainings Pet First Aid Course

Welcome to your ProTrainings Pet First Aid Course. This course can be taken online at www.propetfirstaid.co.uk or with a ProTrainings approved instructor. You can find approved instructors by searching on www.procourses.co.uk or by contacting us directly on support@protrainings.uk or 01206 805359.

This manual is designed to be used exclusively by students who have completed a ProTrainings online Pet First Aid Course or a ProTrainings classroom course that has been certified by a ProTrainings approved instructor.

You will receive an official certificate on completion of the online course. You can validate your certified CPD certificate and print off a PDF copy online via your login at www.propetfirstaid.co.uk or by calling or emailing our office.

Once you have completed the classroom course, you will receive a certificate and wallet sized card in the post.

Make sure you register online for the latest updates. Online students are automatically signed up to receive updates. Your instructor should have registered you already, and if you are doing an online course, you will have already received your login details if you have this book. If you have any problems logging in or with certification, please email or call us.

This is an example of the ProTrainings classroom certificate that you will receive in the post after your course. If you do not receive it, along with your traceable student number, please let us know. Online courses require you to print your certificate online.



Introduction to the Course

People learn first aid skills for humans, but quite often miss out on first aid for pets. Some simple training enables you to learn skills that could save your pet from suffering pain and discomfort, and may also save their life.

Firstly, a Pet First Aid Course does not replace qualified professional care by a local vet, but it is an important skill to be able to help pets in need.

Video-based online training

At ProTrainings, we have developed a video-based online pet first aid course and a classroom course to train pet owners how to care for their pets in an emergency. The online course will allow pet owners to view a series of videos at their own pace in the comfort of their home, and on completion they will be able to print out their own colour certificate. They will also be able to print a free PDF Pet First Aid Student Manual, receive reminders to retrain and can also opt to receive a weekly pet first aid refresher video email reminding them of a different pet skill every week.

We will be launching news and information on the pet site in future to give more news and information to pet owners.

Classroom training

With the classroom courses, you will learn basic first aid skills in a friendly, informal classroom environment at a pace to suit the group. By listening to the instructor, having discussions, practicing and answering questions, you will be in an ideal learning environment.

- Save time in the classroom with an online-only course, or attend a classroom course with a ProTrainings approved instructor locally
- If you choose the online course, you can fit the course around your work, and go at your own pace
- You will have access to the online course for eight months after the course to review where needed (online courses only)
- All students receive a reminded email when training is due for renewal
- Receive a free colour PDF Pet First Aid Student Manual to download
- Receive an optional free weekly video refresher email to keep skills fresh in pet first aid
- All student, online or classroom, will receive a login area on our site with lots of new features
- Classroom-only students will not have access to the video training unless they purchase the course

Lesson Schedule and Contents

This course covers the primary care skills and other injuries and illnesses that you could come across when owning a pet. We focus on dogs, as care is similar with all animals.

- Introduction to the course
- The vet and your role in first aid
- Keeping your pet safe in an emergency
- Car accidents
- Pet proofing your home
- Communication and care of your pet
- How pets show pain
- Checking your pet's health
- Restraint of a pet in need and the use of a muzzle
- Breathing and respiratory problems, including choking
- Dog CPR
- Drowning
- Shock
- Pet first aid kits
- Broken bones
- Spinal injury and moving an injured pet
- Controlling bleeding
- Dressings and bandages
- Paw problems
- Ears, eyes and mouth
- Illnesses
- Poisoning, bites and stings
- Burns and temperature related problems
- The older dog
- Cats
- Small dog care
- Puppies and young animals
- Travelling with your dog abroad
- Summary

On a final note, as with all first aid, the skills we learn are designed to help a patient before professional help arrives or we can move the patient to a medical professional.



Introduction to Pet First Aid

We train in first aid and CPR without thinking, but we do not learn how to adapt this life skill to our pets.

We all love our pets; they are part of our family. This is why we have developed this basic first aid course, to make it easier for pet owners to learn how to deal with first aid emergencies involving our pets.

Making sure your pet has regular exercise, healthy food and readily available water are all vital ingredients to keeping your pet healthy and happy.

Regular check-ups and vaccinations are also an important part of taking care of your pet.

This course mainly covers dogs, as it is not possible to list every type of animal for every skill. The basic care is the same for all animals, and we summarise the differences during the course. But remember, special care must be taken with some animals.



The Vet and your Role in First Aid

Vets are a vital link in ensuring the best care is given to animals. You need to make sure you are registered with a vet and that you take your pet for regular check-ups.

Regular vaccinations are important to avoid the risk of disease and illness.

If a pet is hurt then you need to make sure you get them to the vet as safely as possible. In serious cases, it may be best to call the vet and tell them you are on your way and what has happened.

Vets will often travel to you, although there are extra charges for this. There are many charities that offer subsidised vet care for people on low incomes. Use the pages in the back of this manual to write down the important numbers to contact a vet. Program these details in to your whole families' mobile phones so everyone has the details.

Remember

- First aid is just that, immediate care before veterinary help
- It is an important part of caring for your pet
- If you have pet insurance, they may have a helpline that you can call for advice
- Make sure you are registered with a local vet
- Keep the vet's number in your phone
- Make sure your pet has regular check-ups with the vet
- A vet needs information on how the problem occurred and the timescale. They may need detailed information on what has happened



Vaccines and your Pet

Dogs – There are 3 different vaccines that are used in dogs. The first vaccine given is the routine vaccine against the major endemic diseases of distemper, hepatitis, parvovirus, coronavirus, leptospirosis and parainfluenza.

The first injection is given at 6 to 8 weeks – it is advised that the puppy is in his/her new home for at least 5 days prior to the 1st vaccination. The 2nd vaccination must be given at least 2 and not more than 4 weeks after the 1st vaccination. Additionally, the 2nd vaccination cannot be given before 10 weeks of age. Puppies will be immune from all these major diseases 2 weeks after the 2nd vaccination and at that point can be taken out on his/her first walk on pavements and streets. Booster vaccination is required annually; the practice will send a reminder to advise you when booster vaccinations are due.

The specific kennel cough vaccine is an intranasal vaccine where a few drops of the vaccine are administered via the nostrils of the dog. It is advised that a vaccination is given for all dogs with a respiratory or heart complaint. Additionally, any dogs which are boarded several times per year should be vaccinated as they are more liable to transfer the infection into or out of the kennel. Finally, it is advised that the vaccine where the symptoms of a persistent cough would be troublesome for the dog or the owner e.g. in a small house where the dog is left on his own for long periods. Annual boosters are recommended for dogs at risk or a single vaccination prior to entry to the kennels as appropriate.

Cats – Kittens have to wait a little longer before they can be vaccinated, the earliest they can start being inoculated is 8 weeks and then the 2nd injection 3-4 weeks later with them having to be 12 weeks before the 2nd injection to get the most effective cover.

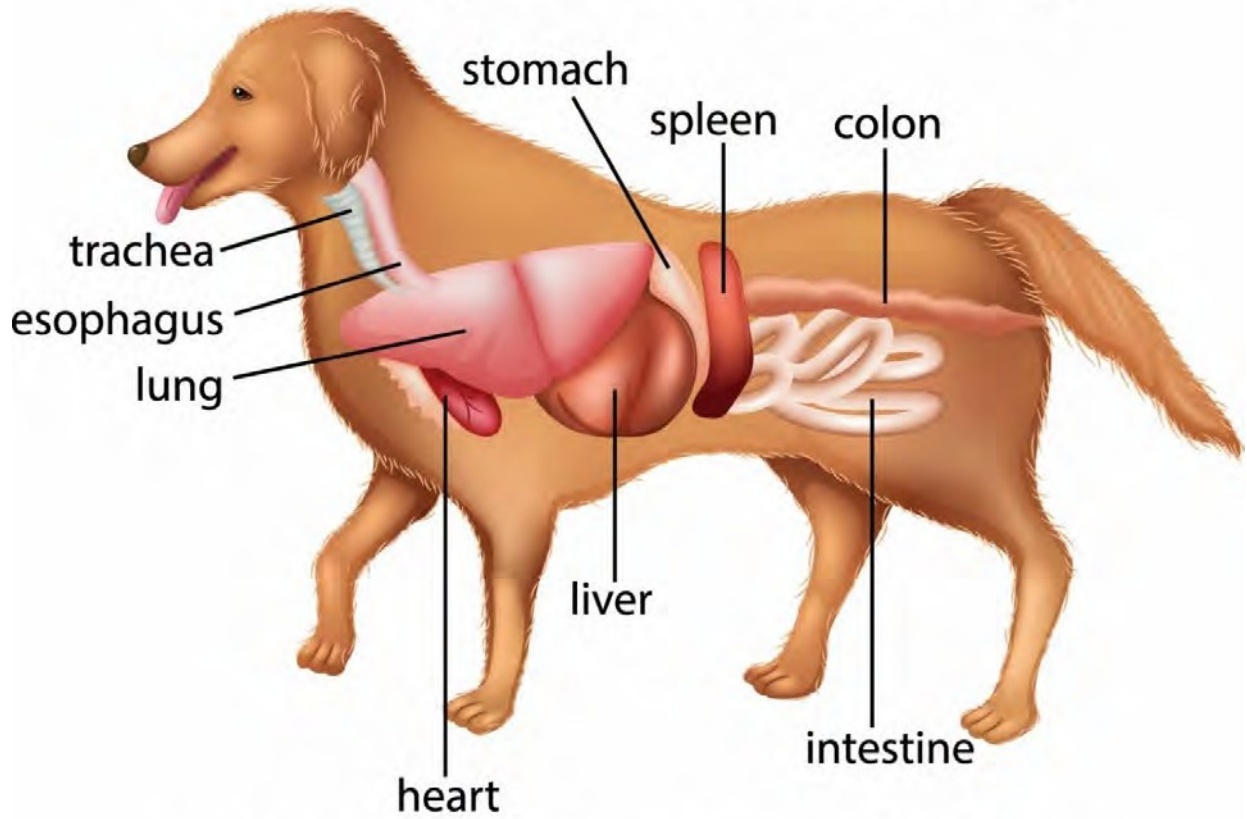
Viral cat flu (Calicivirus and Herpes) is a widespread problem and possibly fatal to young kittens, with many infected cats becoming carriers and suffering with recurrent symptoms for the rest of their lives. It is spread via coughing, sneezing and direct contact. It is estimated that there are 70,000* cases a year. Your cat can also get a bacterial form of cat flu which can likewise be fatal and can be transmitted between dogs and cats.

Feline Leukaemia is a major cause of death in young adult cats. The virus is spread by close contact, for example, mutual grooming or fighting which puts entire males at greater risk. Kittens can also be infected by their mothers whilst still in the womb and the disease may not show signs for years after infection. It is a very serious disease with about 13,000* cases a year*, the disease lowers your pet's immune system leading to secondary infections, tumours and death.

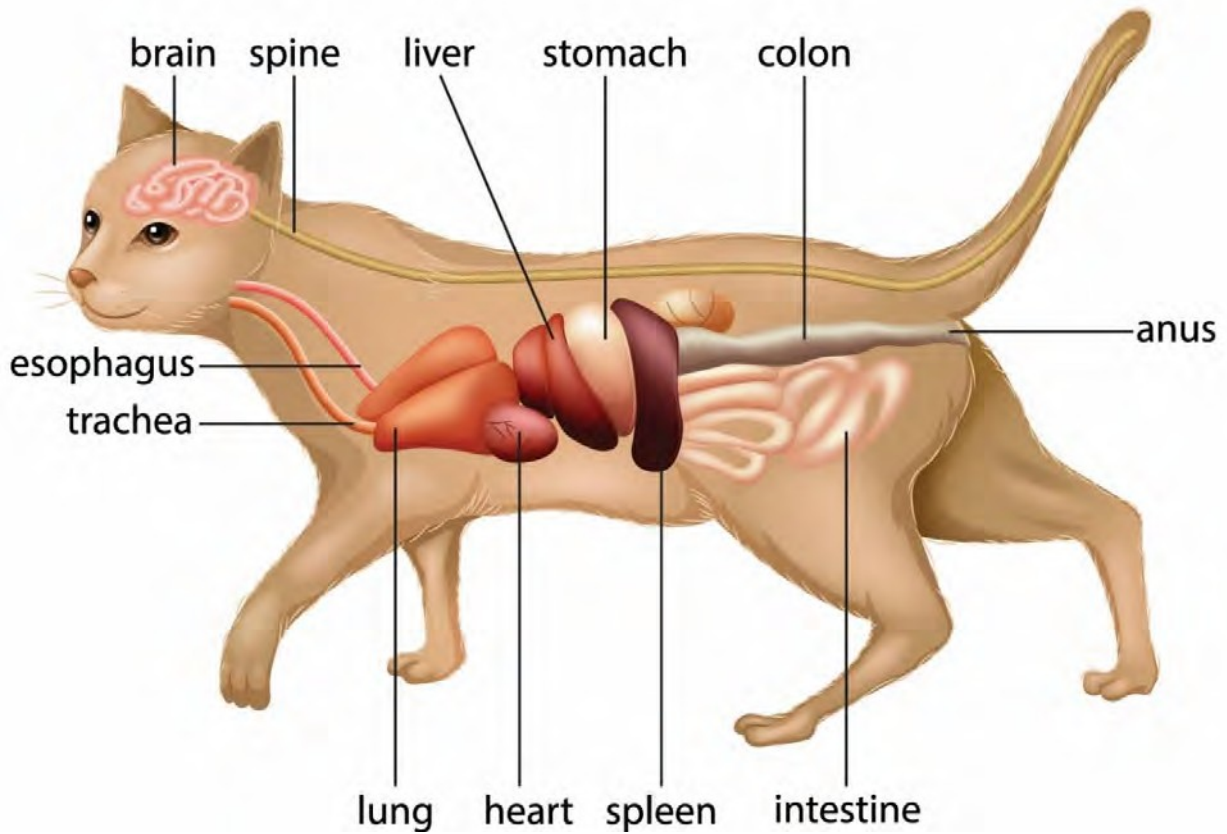
Panleukopenia is thankfully uncommon in the UK but that is thanks to people keeping up with their pet's vaccinations. It is very similar to parvovirus in dogs and is often fatal. *estimate based on extrapolation of cases received by CICADA survey.

You may also choose to vaccinate your cat against bacterial cat flu Chlamydophilafelis that can cause a recurrent conjunctivitis and Rabie if planning on travelling abroad.

Anatomy of a Domestic Dog



Anatomy of a Domestic Cat



Keeping your Pet Safe in an Emergency

If something happens to your pet, you will be in a rush to help. Rushing in too fast may put you and the animal at risk. Many extra accidents happen due to not thinking about the risks before helping. This is the same with human first aid.

Stop first to make sure that you have time to think about dangers: What could harm you? What action should you take? Will the animal hurt you? Is there traffic that could hit you?

Once you have accessed the scene, you should act and deal with the incident. The whole time you are working on the animal you need to take care, as the animal itself could be a danger.

Some of the dangers you could face are:

- Traffic
- People
- Electricity
- Gas
- Fire or heat
- Chemicals
- Slip, trip hazards
- Sharp objects
- Animals

Remember

- Scene safety
- Stop, think, act
- Look for dangers at the start and the whole time you are caring for the animal
- Your pet may be the danger to you
- Decide what you are going to do (vet, transporting the animal, etc.)
- Take care with chemicals
- If hurt by glass, make sure you are safe as well as the animal

Car Accidents

Car accidents are a serious problem and can result in a multitude of injuries and risks to you and the animal. This is a major worry of pet owners, as they will feel useless in this situation. It is vital to keep calm and safe. There may be an immediate danger from other cars and you may need to move the animal to safety; using a makeshift stretcher, like a parcel shelf out of a car, may be the best way to do this.

Moving an animal can cause more problems, but you often do not have a choice. Make sure that you avoid bending joints or the back as much as you can when moving the animal. You will come across lots of possible injuries and these are covered elsewhere on this course, but stay safe and get the help of a vet as soon as possible. Some vets will travel out to help in an emergency.

You will need to be very observant to ensure you do not miss anything, as animals cannot tell you what hurts. Check over the whole body, reassuring the animal the whole time.

Take care as they may show pain by growling or biting.

Remember

- Identify the problem
- Make sure the scene is safe before you approach
- Keep the injured animal calm
- Deal with the whole problem, not just the pet
- Avoid any twisting or bending movement as much as possible
- Remember that the animal could go into shock
- Get help and advice



Pet Proofing your Home

Prevention is better than cure, so make sure your home is safe. There are many dangers about the home, and pet proofing is like child proofing as animals can consume poisons, break glass or get hurt in similar ways to a child.

If a dog, for example, is left for long periods of time, they will get bored and look for something to do – this may lead to danger.

Make sure the pet has food and water, and lots of toys to amuse them.

Spend some time looking at your home and look at possible ways your pet could get trapped, cut itself, fall, take food or come into contact with poison, to name a few.

Make sure that fires are guarded, to avoid the risk of singeing or burning.

- Don't leave food out, especially foods such as chocolate
- Never leave anything out that could encourage a pet to climb onto surfaces
- Make sure that your pet has plenty of fresh water at all times
- If you use bleaching products in your toilets, ensure that your pet does not have access, as many pets will drink out of a toilet, especially if there is no other fresh water available
- Make sure that poisons are kept locked away
- Puppies are inclined to chew, so make sure that electrical cables are tidied away out of reach
- Fireworks can make many pets to panic. If your pet is afraid of fireworks, stay with them when possible. If you are going out, ensure that they are left somewhere where there is nothing that could cause them harm
- If you are going out, make sure that your pet has toys to play with, as well as plenty of water and food. Dogs who are bored can become destructive and develop habitual barking

Communicating and Caring for Pets

As with any first aid emergency, you need to talk to the patient. Animals are soothed by voice, the same as humans. Make sure you do not make sudden movements that could scare or threaten the animal.

We all talk to animals and they react by calming down or wanting attention. In an emergency, your pet still needs this contact and it will help them to relax more, which can be life saving for the animal. Animals are very loyal and fun, so have fun with your pet.

If you are treating an unknown animal, still talk in a soft voice and reassure them. Avoid looking straight at them as you approach, as this can be perceived as threatening.

Remember

- Talking reassures your pet
- Stroking reduces stress
- Avoid sudden movement, which could startle an animal
- Gain the animal's trust
- Do nothing that will threaten your pet
- Be prepared to put a smaller animal in a cage
- Be very observant



How Pets Show Pain

A pet cannot talk to you, so they show pain in other ways. You may notice that the animal is different in their behaviour. This can be aggression to you, wanting attention, hiding away somewhere, whimpering or whining.

If you see any changes then check to see if anything is wrong. Be aware of any signs that could indicate that the animal is in pain. Check out any possible wound sites. This can be done by a simple injury assessment from head to foot. Make sure the whole time you are talking to the animal to reassure it.

Different animals show pain in different ways, so we cannot tell how a particular animal will show that it is hurt or unwell, but if you are observant and you know what normal is, then this will help you to identify the problem and offer the best care.

Some animals seem to show pain when they are fine. This is often a defensive action and they need comforting. Take everything you see seriously, until you know otherwise.

Look out for:

- Changes in behaviour
- Aggression
- Whimpering and growling
- Hiding
- Restless
- Holding a leg off the ground
- Shaking of the head
- Rubbing a body part
- Unusual or excessive licking or grooming

Take care

- Maybe it is obvious and there is blood or deformity
- Look closely at areas of concerns
- Watch out in case a dog snaps or bites if you make the pain worse

Checking your Pet's Health

Before a medical problem arises, it is a good idea to practice taking a pet's pulse, doing circulation checks and checking the colour inside the mouth. If you know what "normal" is then you will be able to identify abnormal signs.

You can check the pulse of a dog from the inside of a dog's back leg, on the femoral artery.

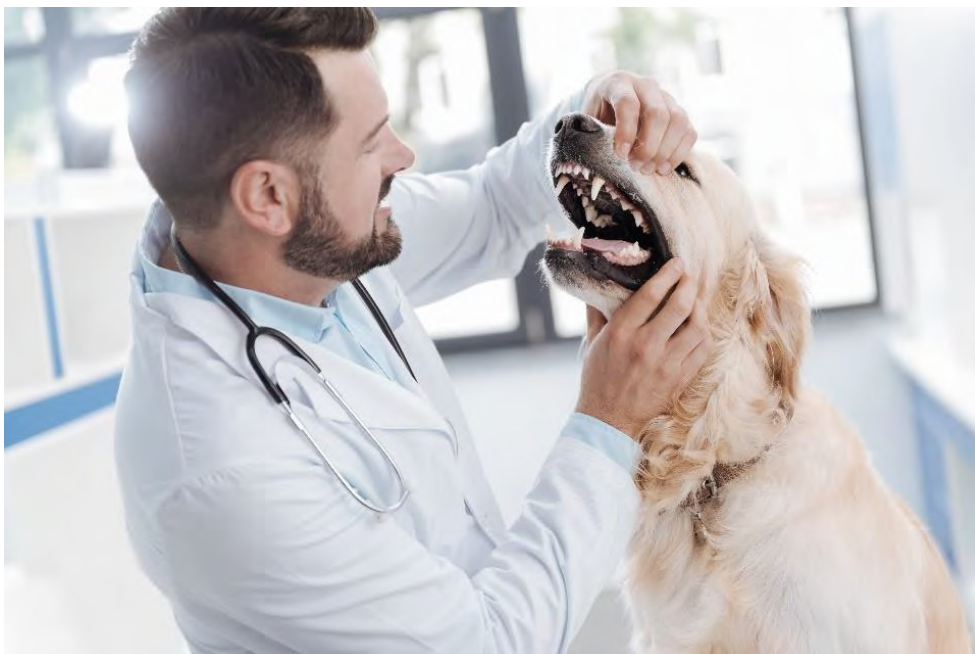
Pulse rates will vary depending on the age, size or breed of an animal. Average pulses are 70-90, faster on small dogs. Find out a rest pulse of your pet and look at the difference after exercise.

Find out what is normal now so, when you have a problem, you know what is wrong.

Remember

- Pulse – check and find out the pet's normal rate, so you will be able to detect changes
- Nose – a dry warm nose can indicate problems
- Are they more restless than usual?
- Do they show aggression or discomfort if you touch them?
- Condition of the coat can indicate good or poor health
- Weight gain or weight loss
- Capillary refill – press the gum and you will see the refill
- Mouth, tongue, dribble and breath
- Eyes (clear, dirty, crusty, swollen, open, closed, etc.)
- If your pet is more lethargic than usual, this may be indicative of poor health

The above are only indications that your pet is not feeling well; always seek professional advice from your vet.



Restraint of a Pet in Need and Using a Muzzle

Sometimes, in order to treat or check a pet, you need to restrain it. This needs to be done in a safe manner. This skill should be used as a last resort and you are best to take advice on this from a vet or animal professional.

You may need to wrap the animal in a blanket or towel. Talk to the animal to calm them down as much as possible. Pet crates are a good idea to transport and to keep calm. There are many types on the market but make sure you buy one that is correct for your type and size of pet and make sure it is well maintained. Old or makeshift crates can cause injury and stress to animals.

You may, in some cases, need to muzzle a dog to avoid getting bitten. If you do have to muzzle a dog then do this carefully and make sure you:

- Do not use on animals with a respiratory problem
- Do not use if there is any damage to the nose or mouth
- Do not over tighten
- Check it all the time to make sure it is not too tight
- Remove it as soon as possible
- Remove to allow the dog to drink

Breathing and Respiratory Problems and Choking

Monitor breathing carefully by looking, listening and feeling for breathing for up to 10 seconds. If there are no signs of breathing then you can give chest compressions to force air out of the lungs and draw fresh air in. You can also pull the tongue out, close the mouth and blow up the nose; this technique is called “mouth to nose ventilations”.

Ensure that the animal has every chance to breath, as with humans we must open the airway by extending the head back carefully. If the animal is not conscious then you may have to ensure the tongue is gently moved forward to keep the air way clear.

Choking can be a serious problem, but often looks worse than it is. Animals are very good at clearing an obstruction themselves, so give them time and space to try to clear the obstruction. Do not push your fingers down the throat of an animal, as you may push the item down or get bitten! If the animal becomes unresponsive, chest compressions can help to clear an obstruction. Prevention is best, so make sure food is safe to eat and stored out of reach.

If an animal is having breathing problems due to poison, you need to be very careful not to get the poison on you.

- Allow animals to try and expel the object themselves, as animals are very good at clearing obstructions themselves; it often looks worse than it is
- Take care that you don't get bitten when putting your hand in a pet's mouth
- CPR may be needed
- Practice locating a pulse on your pet

Never practice rescue breaths or CPR on a live animal – this could cause serious injury to your pet

Pet CPR and Rescue Breathing

Notice: With so many different sizes and types of animal, it is not possible to give exact information on a course for every possible situation that you may come across. Below is general advice, but more detailed information will be made available at www.propetfirstaid.co.uk and our Pet First Aid blog.

A pet's need for CPR is usually due to a respiratory problem rather than a cardiac problem. Before giving CPR, you first need to find out if the animal is breathing and this can be done by placing your hand over the chest and your ear by their nose and looking, listening and feeling for signs of breathing.

If you do not detect breathing you should give 5 breaths spaced every 3-5 seconds. If the dogs start to breath, you should stop. Dogs can have a bite reflex, which means even when unconscious they may bite you, so take care.

Breaths are delivered in most animals by putting the neck in a neutral position, pulling the tongue gently forward and sealing the mouth closed with one hand. Breaths are then delivered through the nose. In cats and some small breeds of dog, you can seal your mouth around the mouth and nose.

Dogs should be placed on their right side to make the compressions more effective, due to the position of the heart in the body. This side allows more effective compressions as the heart is nearer the surface.

If attempts at breathing for the dog are unsuccessful, check for a pulse by feeling just inside the knee of the back leg and by putting your ear on the dog's chest and listening for a heartbeat. If there is a heartbeat, continue rescue breathing: one breath every 3-5 seconds. If no heartbeat is detected, place the dog on their right side, start chest compressions by placing your hand on the centre of the chest, roughly where the dog's front elbow is and push down on the chest. Give 30 compressions at rate of 100-120 per minute (approximately two per second), then perform two rescue breaths, followed by 30 compressions and repeat until the dog shows signs of life, or your vet takes over.

You may need to wipe mucus from the mouth and you will need to keep the airway open and the tongue out while compressing.

With dogs that are very round in the chest, you may need to roll them slightly on to their back to deliver compressions.

If you notice the stomach swelling, this can be due to excessive breaths pushing the air into the stomach, so you may have to gently compress the stomach once every minute. Be very aware that this and excessive breaths may cause vomiting, which needs to be cleared from the mouth.

CPR is not always effective with animals or humans. You need to use your personal judgement to know when to stop. If the patient shows signs of life, stop and re-assess.

CPR can be carried out on all animals using similar methods, but consider using just one or two fingers instead of a hand on the very small creatures.

Remember

- Remember to lay a dog on the right side to achieve more effective chest compressions
- Close the mouth and pull the tongue out to secure the airway

Never practice rescue breaths or CPR on a live animal – this could cause serious injury to your pet

Drowning

This is a common concern, particularly for dog owners, as dogs can get trapped in water or fall through thin ice. There are many reports in the news of dogs falling into water or ice and the owner jumping in to rescue them. In many cases the owner dies and the dog survives. Sometimes it can be easier to encourage the dog, rather than take any risks. **Do not take any risks.**

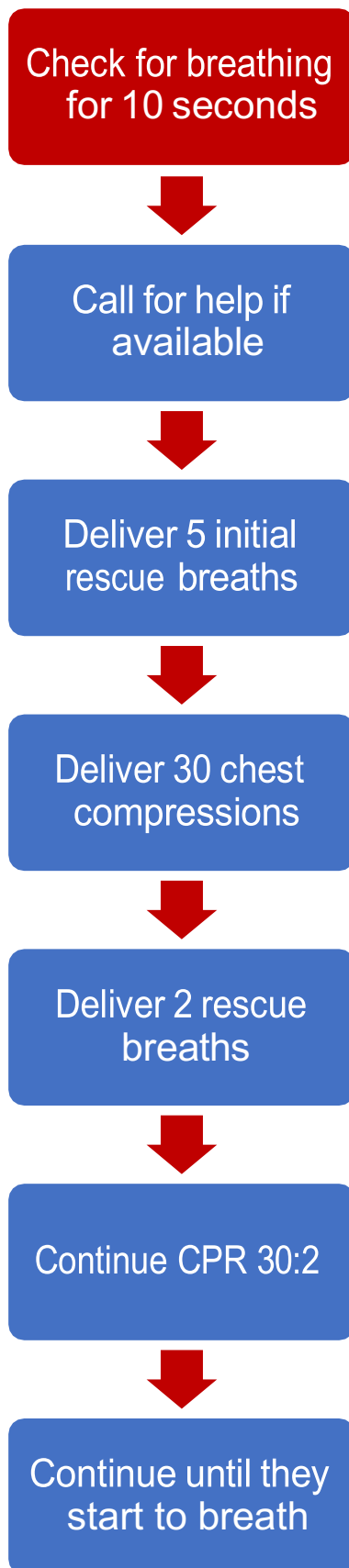


Once you get the dog out of water, you need to check breathing and carry out respirations and CPR if needed. It is necessary to drain out water from the respiratory track by holding them upside down or raising the rear legs in larger dogs.

Look for signs of hypothermia and treat accordingly. In the case of hypothermia, do not rapidly reheat the animal, as this can cause other problems and occasionally cardiac arrest.

- Look out for potential dangers – if ice cannot take your dog's weight, it won't take yours
- Safe approach
- Animals do not do what you want sometimes, so be adaptive
- Hypothermia - warm your pet up slowly, as sudden warming can cause serious problems
- Get to a vet without delay

Pet CPR Flowchart



- Open airway
- Check for normal breathing for no more than 10 seconds

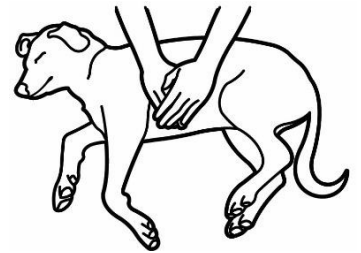


- Call for help and get someone to call your vet if possible

- Open airway, pull the tongue to one side and seal the mouth. Deliver 5 rescue breaths until you see the chest rise by blowing in the nose



- Deliver 30 compressions in the centre of chest at a rate of 100-120 compressions per minute to a depth of at least one third of the depth of the chest with one hand



- Then open the airway and deliver 2 breaths until you see the chest rise

- Repeat at 30 compressions and 2 breaths

- Continue until they start to breath, you are too tired to continue, someone else takes over or the vet arrives



Shock

Shock is the result of a lack of oxygen to the body's tissues. It can be caused by several issues, such as blood loss, burns, extremes in temperature, illness, dehydration and many other reasons.

Shock is a serious problem and can kill before the actual injury does. Shock can be because of fluid loss from the body due to bleeding, breaks, trauma, internal bleeding and illness. Signs of shock include obvious fluid loss, bluish colour in the gums, restless, drowsiness, aggression, change in character, and unconsciousness.

A good indication is to check capillary refill by pushing the gum for a few seconds, which should make it change colour and then revert to normal within 1-2 seconds. This action will show that there is blood flow, but is only an indication so get help without delay.

Treat shock by encouraging the animal to lie down, and you can gently raise the legs or hindquarter to allow blood to flow back to the vital organs. Shock is a very serious condition and immediate veterinary care is needed. You need to keep the pet warm using a blanket, coat or foil blanket, as they will have trouble regulating their own body temperature while in shock.

If an animal has had an accident, look for signs of shock and keep looking for hours and even days later. There could be an internal bleed that has delayed signs.

- Keep the animal calm and warm, and reassure them
- Lay the animal down on their side to allow blood to flow back to vital organs
- Gently raise the legs or hindquarters, if there are no suspected breaks

Pet First Aid Kits

You can either make a pet first aid kit or buy one. You can buy a pet first aid kit from the login area of this course or our online shop at www.first-aid-online.co.uk. We also offer an advanced pet first aid kit.

First Aid Kit for Pets offers peace of mind. If your pet suffers a cut, bruise or strain, you are fully prepared to treat them and get



Pet First Aid Kit Contents

2 x 20ml pods of saline – to wash away dirt and debris from your pet's eyes and other areas, simply wipe away excess fluid with a gauze swab or paper handkerchief

1 x Medium dressing bandage with ties – to cover an injury, these have tie bandages attached, but do not fasten tightly. Use the microporous tape if additional retention is needed. Cut off the bandage ends after tying

1 x Large dressing bandage with ties – to cover a large injury, these have tie bandages attached but do not fasten tightly. Use the microporous tape if additional retention is needed. Cut off the bandage ends after tying

1 x Foil blanket – to retain body warmth and help combat shock, use this to wrap your vet on the journey to the vets. It may be necessary to hold the blanket in place.

5 x Gauze swabs – for cleaning up fluid or after saline use

1 x Microporous tape – to help hold dressings or bandages in place, it tears easily so scissors are not required

1 x Conforming bandage – if a sprain is suspected, use this around the limb and fasten with tape. Cut off the excess bandage and retain the rest for possible future use

2 x Pairs of vinyl powder gloves – wear these always when attending an injured pet. Discard after use.

2 x Plastic pouches – to cover foot injuries and help keep them clean, fasten with tape. It will minimise blood spillages on to carpets, car upholstery and furniture

4 x Alcohol free cleansing wipes

1 x Small scissors

1 x Tweezers



Fractured Bones

The most common bone for an animal to fracture is the leg. Fracturing a leg and keeping the dog still can be very hard. You may need to restrain the dog and consider using a muzzle if needed.

It is vital that you NEVER straighten or move a broken or fractured bone in order to put it back in the right position as this can cause extreme pain and can cause more problems.

Fractures can be closed or open. With open fractures, the bones have come through the skin and therefore it is a massive infection risk and the risk of blood loss. Cover the wound with a dressing where possible but do not push the bone back in to the body.

Be very careful when moving the animal, you may have to carry them. You can pick a dog up with something like a parcel shelf or car floor mat to act as a stretcher.

- Try to avoid any unnecessary movement
- Move an animal carefully to transport to a vet
- Only splint if under the advice of a vet
- Call your vet



Spinal Injury and Moving an Injured Pet

A damaged spine can be life threatening, so make sure you do not move an animal unnecessarily. Use a board to move the animal to the vet or call a vet out to move the animal.

Some difficult decisions have to be made, as moving can make things worse. However, you may have no choice if a vet is unable to come out. Without treatment, you risk paralysis, limited movement, bowel or bladder weakness, pain and other problems.

Broken bones can heal, but spinal cord damage is not treatable, so we must do all we can to avoid unnecessary movement or excitement.

Remember

- Avoid movement whenever possible
- Calm the animal
- Use something as a spinal board
- Blankets or towels can help to restrain injured pets so they do not move
- Look out for other injuries
- Call the vet and tell them you are coming
- Be careful you are not bitten or scratched
- Practice moving a toy dog onto a makeshift stretcher like a parcel shelf from a car

Controlling Bleeding

Bleeding can be controlled by applying direct pressure to the wound or by using a pressure dressing. You can also, in the case of leg bleeds, apply pressure above the wound to reduce blood flow.

The dressings are applied in the same way as to humans. Start furthest from the heart and work up the limb. If the bleeding is on the body, you can apply direct pressure using a gauze pad or bandage. If blood comes through then apply another.

You can apply indirect pressure higher up a leg to reduce the blood flow, but do not apply a strap to cut off all circulation. Careful use of ice packs can help to control bleeding, as they restrict the blood flow, but be careful not to burn the animal.

- Use direct pressure and use of an ice pack to control the bleeding
- Look out for shock
- Get the animal to the vet without delay
- Shock can kill, so take care
- Make the pet lay down and keep the calm

Dressings and Bandages

The dressings used are like those used on humans; the difference with animals is that they cannot tell you if a dressing is on too tight, so take extra care.

You should only put dressings to transfer the animal to the vet. The best thing to do is practice. You can practice on humans or toy animals to get the experience of applying different dressings.

Remember dressings should be functional and effective; you are not market out of 10.

Paw Problems

Injuries to paws are very common, especially in dogs. Small thorns and stones can get stuck in pads or between pads. These are easily removed using tweezers from as close to the skin as possible. Take care that you have removed the whole torn, as leaving small fragment causes pain and can be a source of infection. If unsure, get them checked out by a vet.

As animals are active, they will want to walk on the affected leg. You may find that they simply hold the leg up and walk on three legs. Restraining and stressing the dog out can cause more problems.

Snow and ice can also causa a dog pain. These can cause freezing between the pads and a dog will limp or hold the paw off the ground. You will need to carefully remove any snow and slowly warm and dry the paw in warm, not hot, water.

- Practice treatment on an arm or toy
- Practice bandaging a paw on a toy or a fist
- Make sure you protect yourself against being bitten or scratched
- Dew claws and nails often get broken and can bleed a lot
- Discuss the need to cover the dressing when the animal goes out with your vet
- Dogs and cats can get about very well, even when holding one paw up



Animal bites and scratches on pets

Simply by having animals in your house, there is always the risk of you yourself receiving a bite or scratch. If you or your pet is unlucky enough to be bitten by an animal, there is not only the initial wound to deal with but also the risk of infection and potential conditions such as Cellulitis. Animals carry different bacteria in their mouths and these can pose a more serious risk to both children and the elderly who have a weaker immune system. Dog bites may look worse simply because their teeth are larger but cats, with their sharper, more pointed teeth, can penetrate deeply into the tissues. Cat bites are more likely to introduce bacteria deep into the wound, causing a potentially serious infection and damage to tendons and ligaments.

Cat bites and scratches pose different risks that can spread a bacterial infection and these are called cat-scratch diseases or CSD's. Symptoms of a CSD generally occur 3-10 days after the bite or scratch was inflicted. The area may appear swollen, red and might have a discharge puss oozing from it, it might also feel warm or be painful. An infected person can also have a fever, a headache, poor appetite, and feel tired. Generally, CSD is not serious and in fact, medical treatment might not be required.

As a first aider, initially ensure that the scene is safe and you are not going to get hurt by what has hurt the patient. Wash the wound area with soap and warm water or a first aid mild disinfectant solution. Dry the wound with a clean gauze from your first aid kit and then cover it with a sterile dressing. If the bite is large, deep or the skin is torn, get professional help.

Where the wound becomes swollen, painful or they become unwell, seek a professional help, as antibiotics or other treatments may be required and if you suspect a risk of rabies, get them to the vets or hospital as soon as possible.

Finally, with humans, people often panic and assume that a tetanus injection is needed, but actually, the risks of tetanus a bite are minimal, as the disease is found to be present in the soil, not in the mouths of animals. Where the wound is dirty and the patient is unsure if they have had a tetanus injection, advise them to see a Doctor immediately.

Nail and Claw Injuries

One common injury that you could come across in your pet is a damaged or broken nail or dew claw. The dew claw is found on the leg and the nails on the end of their toes.

- When you visit the vet ask them to check your dogs' claws, they may need trimming and the vet can do it for you
- Claws can be damaged when playing or running
- Claws can be worn down when walking, but may still need to be trimmed



- Many pet owners trim their dogs claws themselves, if you do, make sure that you know how to do it, some dogs don't like their claws trimmed and can fidget and make it difficult, if this is the case get them trimmed by a professional
- Dew Claws can become caught and damage or torn
- Check the paw for torn claws, bleeding or any sign of swelling or infection
- Any wound around the paws can become infected, consider using a pet first aid spray to protect after you have cleaned the wound and apply a dressing
- If bleeding apply pressure using a gauze pad, hold it in place to allow the wound to clot, if you can't stop the bleed or if it is excessive, take your pet to the vet
- As with all wounds if you have any concerns, seek veterinary assistance.

You can apply a dressing to the paw which will keep the pressure on the site and you may find it only has to be left on for a few hours.

Cruciate Ligament

A common injury in larger breed dogs are cruciate ligament injuries. These happen in the stifle, so the knee of the back leg of dogs. And they will often happen if they have been jumping or running and they get their foot caught in a hole or a little divot, and they go forwards and the pressure on the cruciate ligament as they move forwards enables that ligament to rupture or at least partially tear. The common way a dog will present when they have a ruptured or torn cruciate ligament, they won't be able to fully weight bear on that back leg. What they commonly do is walk on their toes. They are walking along and just touch the floor with their toes. So they can still just about weight bear so you know that nothing is completely fractured, as in a fractured bone, but they are not putting the full weight through because if they do, the instability in the knee would be very painful for them.

If you have a large breed dog with cruciate ligament injury they will almost certainly require surgery. The speed at which this is done after the injury very much depends on the pain the dog is in. It's not a true emergency in that you require surgery the next day. We often need to work up and do X-rays, and make sure there isn't any concurrent arthritic disease or anything else that would mean that we had to delay or change the type of surgery we were going to do. But in most of these cases, they will require surgery.

In a smaller dog, cruciate injuries do happen, although they are less likely, and sometimes they don't require surgery. The reason for this is because smaller dogs are a lot lighter. And so the weight they are carrying and distributing over their four legs enables the stifle of the affected leg to not repair fully, but repair enough that they are no longer lame on the leg and continue to be mobile after the injury has occurred.

Ears, Eyes and Mouth

Ears

The inside of the ears should be a dull pink colour and free from dirt and odour. If an animal shakes its head then this could indicate an ear problem. Do not put anything inside the ear as you can easily damage it. It is common for dogs and cats to put their head in gaps then tear the ear. Cuts and tears to ears can cause the ear to bleed considerably; a simple bandage can help while transporting them to the vet.

When bandaging the ear, try not to cover the good ear, so hearing is not totally restricted. Bleeding in the ear will be uncomfortable and they may try and shake their head or use their paw to pull the dressing off. Try to calm and reassure your pet to keep the dressing in place. Do not tie the dressing too tight as it will be across the neck and you do not want to restrict breathing in any way.

- Practice if possible, bandaging an ear on a toy dog
- Remember, when ears get cut, they bleed a lot
- Do not put things in the ear; that is a vet's job if necessary
- You can carefully clean an ear with wet cotton wool
- If an animal shakes its head, it could indicate a problem with the ears
- If bleeding, try not to allow the blood to enter the ear, as this will be uncomfortable and may cause stress



Eyes

Eyes should be clean and bright. Look closely and inspect for injury. Eyes can show signs of illness as well, so if you are not sure of anything consult a vet.

Covering eyes is not always a possibility as more harm may be done when the animal pulls off the bandage.

Mouth

Check your pet's mouth regularly. If your pet is off their food, check for signs of tooth decay, tooth damage, injury or gum disease.

Fight wounds

There will be times when your pets will have been bitten by another dog or by another cat. In these instances, it is recommended to go and see your vet, even if initially the wound does not look like it has punctured the skin too much, very superficial. The problem with these bites is that the teeth and the bacteria that live in dogs' and cats' mouths can be very, very toxic and they can be really bad at creating an infection and even an abscess. It is better to try and get these bites treated before the abscess or the infection takes hold.

The problem with the abscesses is that they take a few days to come up and sometimes you will not even see that your animal has been bitten until the abscess comes up. By the time the abscess is there, that infection has been onboard for several days and can make your pet quite unwell. So, if you do see a bite then get your vet to have a look at your pet and potentially prescribe some antibiotics if you know that it is from another dog or a cat. If you do not see the bite until that abscess comes up, get your pet seen as soon as you can because already that infection will have been in their system for at least a day or two and so it is really important to get the right antibiotics onboard as soon as you can. There is also a risk of infection from a cat scratch or a dog scratch wound. This is again because the bacteria that is carried on their feet can set up an infection at the site of the wound. If you do notice a graze, a cut, any wound, a puncture wound that has been inflicted by another dog or a cat, it is important to get them seen by your local vet.

Chemical Burns

With chemical burns, there is the greater risk of ingestion of that chemical, mostly it is going to be household chemicals that you normally keep well away. But cats, in particular, can be very curious. They will go into cupboards, they will look at things, they will lick things to try and taste them. Dogs and cats are very clean animals, so if they do get anything on themselves, they will automatically try and lick that off and therefore ingest that potentially caustic and toxin into their bodies.

The immediate response that you will find is in their mouths so you may get swelling up of the tongue. The signs you will see is irritation and probably drooling. They may go and open their mouths because they are uncomfortable, they may be sick, trying to bring it back up again. And in those cases, if you can have a look in their mouth and see if there is anything that you could remove if there was something that had a toxin on it that you could then take out, you may want to get some water and flush out the mouth if possible. In most cases, the animal probably would not let you do that but if you can then flushing out the mouth would be a good thing to do.

If you find any burns on their skin that they have been licking, try and prevent that from happening either by covering that or in some cases you may have a Buster collar accessible. Or the plastic lampshades, you can put that on your dog or cat to prevent them from persistently licking out the area that you may be concerned about while you are transporting them to a vet.

Illness

Animals suffer from a wide variety of illnesses and if your dog is unwell, consult your vet. This course is not a replacement for prompt veterinary care: it covers the basics on looking for signs and symptoms, but only so that we know there is a problem and we can give accurate information to the vet to assist them more in treating the issue.



If your pet is unwell, animal first aid is easy, but you must take your pet to a vet. We will be covering specific pet illnesses on a later course.

Remember

- Dehydration – always have clean, fresh water available
- If your pet is suffering from diarrhoea or vomiting, contact your vet
- Know what normal is. Look at your pet to ensure you understand when there are differences
- Pets can become aggressive when they are unwell
- Monitor when your pet goes to the toilet to see for differences

Seizures and Epilepsy

One thing that is upsetting to see is a seizure. Treatment for a pet in seizure is the same as treatment for humans: you need to safeguard them from harm during the seizure and reassure them. If it is the pet's first seizure or if you think they may have been harmed during the seizure, take them to a vet. An animal with known seizures may sometimes not need veterinary care if they are not injured.

If you suspect that a dog or cat has developed epilepsy, it is useful to note exactly what happens, so that you can describe the seizure accurately to the vet, as it might be a heart attack and not a fit. The vet will need accurate information to offer the best treatment.

A fitting animal will go through tonic and clonic phases, and as part of this they can fall off furniture and injure themselves further. A typical fit involves intense shaking/jerking, sometimes frothing of saliva and “paddling” of limbs, along with the loss of some normal body control (so they may urinate unintentionally). Initial first aid is to prevent harm but otherwise leave them well alone to come around, which can take a few minutes and the pet might be dozey for some time after. It is particularly helpful to not touch them and switch off lights, reduce noise and leave them be, but monitor the situation.

All fits should be recorded and discussed with the vet, as there is the risk of repeated fits and the concern of “status epilepticus” developing. Epilepsy in many animals is well controlled with medication and they continue to lead otherwise normal lives.

Make sure that you consult your vet with any suspected seizure, as the pet will need further treatment. Phone the vet as he will often recommend bringing your pet in the next day as you do not usually want to move them straight after a seizure. They often advise to rest them and advice if there are any complications or they do not get better.

True epilepsy is a condition of often unknown cause affecting the brain. However, the vet will assess the pet to rule out other possible causes. Epileptic pets are usually diagnosed after having several isolated fits from which they appear to have recovered, unless they are in a constant state of fitting (status epilepticus) which is an emergency and needs **urgent** veterinary attention.

It can appear as anything from full-blown convulsions to mild but sudden changes in demeanour and or behaviour.

Signs of an epileptic fit can include:

- Convulsions
- Involuntary passing of bodily fluids
- Changes in behaviour
- Eyes glazing over and unresponsiveness
- A wobbly gait
- Collapse

If your pet fits at home, move sharp and hard objects out of the way. It is generally advised to try not to touch your pet, as they will not be aware of who you are and may well show abnormal behaviour/character, and for some time after the fit too. What's more, handling your dog can sometimes prolong the fit. So just note the time, duration and stages of the fit, so you can describe this all accurately to the vet. Keep the light/noise down and allow the animal to recover in its own time. Also keep a note of when the fits occur, so the vet can tell how well any medication is controlling them.

If your pet is in a constant state of fitting, this is life threatening and they will need immediate attention. However, if they have only had isolated fits, they still require a thorough examination and blood tests to determine an appropriate level of medication to control the strength and frequency of future seizures.

One drug a vet may prescribe is phenobarbitone, but this is not the only drug that is used and tablets used have a variable effect on different animals - so one treatment does not fit all and it may take several weeks or months to get the right balance of dosage. (However, over time the dog's liver will get better at breaking the medication down or the body will develop some resistance to it and the dose/drug may need to be adjusted. This will only be done after further reviews, examinations and blood tests.) Hence, following diagnosis, regular checks and monitoring are needed. Blood tests are done every three or six months, and the results are often available 1-2 days later.

Medication allows my own pet to have a normal life and although the fits are generally controlled, they have not been eliminated.

Stings on your Pet

Like you, insects such as bees, wasps or other flying insects, even some crawling insects can sting your pet. Before treating your pet, you need to ensure that you are not in danger from what hurt them. Also, be aware that your pet may act out of character, as they may be scared or in pain. You may also need to contact your vet, as a severe allergic reaction can occur: known as Anaphylactic shock. This can cause the throat to swell up, which can restrict or stop breathing. This is the same condition that you may have heard about when children or adults eat nuts or are allergic to bee stings.

Any insects can sting your pet and the areas that they are stung will depend on the breed. For example, long-haired animals are more likely to be stung on their face or legs. If you have a short-haired pet, they can be affected on any part of their body.



When an animal gets stung in the face, this can cause excessive swelling and the first concern is to establish if the breathing is, or could be, restricted. It is common for dogs to get stung in their mouth, as they snap at the insect then get stung in the mouth or lips. It is not always easy to see the exact site of the sting, but the swelling can be frightening.

If you think your pet has been stung, inspect them carefully and slowly to see if you can see the sting. Bee stings are different to other insects as they leave the stinger in the body. This will need to be removed by scraping from the base with something like a credit card. If you pull the stinger out you may force more toxin in to the body and the stinger may break, making it more difficult to remove. If you scrape it from the bottom, you can remove the stinger safely.



Ticks

A tick is different from a sting, as the live tick stays on the body and sucks blood out, and can pass on infection. When dogs or cats run in many areas, especially woodland, they can pick up ticks. There are different types of tick, but they are all treated the same. Ticks are an easy host of many diseases that can be passed to dogs.

Lyme disease is the most common disease that can be passed to your dog, but also to you. The sooner you remove a tick, the less damage occurs, and if done in time it will not get a chance to fully bite your dog. Ticks are light to dark grey in colour and they will change colour and get larger as they suck blood from your dog. They are sometimes described as “oversized fleas”. If your dog has been in a high-risk area, carefully inspect them after the walk for ticks, and if you find one it must be removed. The best thing to do is to ask your vet and they will remove it and show you the correct technique. If you are not able to get to a vet, you need to remove the whole tick, as leaving a part of the tick in the body can lead to infection and this is very dangerous, especially smaller dogs.

You can buy tick-removing tools that pull from where the tick is attached to avoid breaking the body. These are fork-shaped devices that lift from both sides of the tick. If you do not have one of these, avoid using tweezers or pliers on the body, as this will break it in half. You need to pull from the head, where it attaches to the skin.

Prevention is best, so ask your vet for the correct treatment for your pet. These can come in the form of “Spot On” treatments, powders or sprays. Ask your vet or pet professional for local advice.



Lyme disease

Ticks are a common parasite that dogs pick up. We do also see them in cats, and in different parts of the country, it is more prevalent. Ticks can carry nasty diseases on them, and that is why we do not like them to be attached to an animal for too long. The one that you can pick up in the UK is Lyme Disease, and that can affect people and also dogs. This is a disease that is not very common, we do not see it a lot, but when it does happen you do need to get it treated. And if you are getting any of the symptoms, which can be muscular, neurological, it can also affect the kidney of an animal. If you are getting any symptoms that may fit with the Lyme Disease and your animal has had ticks on them, then it is worth considering Lyme Disease as a potential cause of their symptoms. It is always important to tell your vet if your animal has had ticks on them. It is also really important if your animal has travelled abroad and they may have picked up ticks there because there are diseases that are coming into the UK that have been contracted while an animal has been travelling and they brought them back.

And because the incubation period of those diseases is quite long, it can be up to several months in certain diseases, the symptoms do not become apparent until they are back in the country and you have almost forgotten that you have been travelling. It is always worth it to say, mentioning, to your vet if your animal is unwell, then just mention that they have travelled abroad because it just gives us an option on your list of differential diagnoses for that animal, you cannot rule out those diseases that can be contracted elsewhere. The ticks themselves can be caught from hedges, from grass, from bushes, wherever your animal is running. If they are in a park or a field there is a potential to get ticks on them. It can be quite seasonal as well, but we are finding that ticks are being discovered on animals all year round nowadays. The tick itself will attach with its mouthparts into your pets and transmit potentially the disease into the bloodstream of your pet whilst feeding from the blood of your pet. They attach very, very small, and initially in a lot of cases we wouldn't be able to see them because animals are very furry and they get tucked up into the coats, and so you cannot see them.

As they feed, and this can take several days, four-five days, the tick grows and then becomes apparent. So often an animal will be brought into us because an owner is worried about a lump they have discovered, and it can turn out to be a tick. They normally stay on the animal for 10 or 11 days. Once they have stopped feeding after that period of time they will then drop off, and they can then jump onto another animal and have another feed when they need to. During that time that they are attached to your animal, this is the time where they could be transmitting the disease. If you discover a tick on your pet, you need to get that



tick safely removed. If you pull the tick off, the chances are that the mouthparts of that tick will stay in your pet, and this then can cause a local reaction, can get infected, the skin can grow over those mouthparts and can become a problem later on.

Therefore, if you are not sure how to remove the tick, take your pet to the vet, get your vet to show you, and the most important thing to do is get a tick remover. If you are in an area of the country where your pet is picking up ticks, invest in a tick remover. Put this in your pet first aid kits. With the tick removers, you slide it underneath the head of the tick, and you twist to twist the mouth parts out of the skin of your pet. Whenever you have the tick out, have a look at it. What you should see are four legs on either side of the tick, and then the two little mouth parts in the middle of the head end of the tick. Make sure that all these parts are out, and if they do not out take your pet to get checked by the vet because they may be able to see those mouthparts and remove them safely for you.

Fleas

Fleas are small flightless insects, parasites of mammals and birds which live off of the blood of their hosts. With their long legs, they have the ability to jump long distances, often 100 times their own body length. This allows them to jump up and horizontally over around 30 cm which, based on their body size, makes them amongst the most agile creatures on the planet. There are over 2500 different types of fleas worldwide. Fleas can be animal specific and only live off one type of animal, like dog fleas, whilst others can live on different animal types.

Flea facts

- Fleas go through four life-cycle stages
- The egg
- The larva
- The pupa
- The adult insect
- Fleas must feed on blood before they can be capable of reproduction
- Female fleas can produce up to 50 eggs a day which is about 1500 in their lifetime, meaning they are capable of establishing themselves very quickly if not controlled.
- Certain types of fleas can produce up to 5000 eggs in their lifetime.

Fleas can live for many months without a host, so homes can become infested long after a pet has left. It is estimated that 95% of an infestation of fleas actually live off the host, meaning you may need to treat the home as well as the animal. Fleas can also pass on certain infections like Myxomatosis in rabbits.

The best control method is to give your pets specific flea treatments. There are many different types which are best suited for different animals, from drops to collars. It is best to consult your pet store or vet to get advice on the best treatment for your particular animal. You should only use

treatments for the animal type they are designed for. Some dog flea treatments are toxic to cats so make sure you use the right one.

If fleas are in your home, you can buy sprays and powders to control and eradicate them. Keeping your pet's bedding clean and regularly vacuuming furniture, floors and under furniture will definitely help to break the lifecycle of the flea. Once you finish vacuuming, always throw the dust bag away.

When it comes to identifying fleas on your pet, the most common indication is a constant scratch, a sure indicator that fleas may be present. It may also be that you have bites on your skin. Other signs can be an allergic reaction, as pets can be allergic to the saliva of the flea.

You can use a fine-tooth flea comb or just look closely at the skin for tiny dark specs in their fur, or you may see small black or brown insects moving about. Where you use a flea comb the fleas or droppings will be seen on the comb, when placing them on a white surface. If you add a few drops of water to what comes off the comb and the droppings turn reddish brown, this is a likely indication of fleas.



Snake Bites

Firstly, in the UK there is only really one snake that will cause problems: The Adder. However, there are more in Europe. Snakes generally will not bother you or your pet, as they will always move away and not just attack. The problem comes when they are threatened or cornered. This can occur when dogs run off track and try to “play” with a snake – as a defensive action, they may bite your dog.

The Adder is the only poisonous snake in the UK; however, there are others in Europe. It is up to 65cm in length and the male and female have a dark zigzag marking on their back and a dark coloured “V” on its head. If you find one, leave it alone. They eat small mammals and are not normally found in gardens.

You need to ensure you are safe and do not get bitten. If possible, look at the snake or even take a picture with your phone to help the vet identify what type of snake has bitten your pet, so they can treat them correctly. If you cannot take a picture, look at the colours, patterns, length and other distinguishing markings. The European Adder bite is common in dogs, but is rarely fatal. If you suspect that your dog has been bitten, you must get them to a vet as soon as possible. Smaller dogs are at a higher risk than larger dogs. Do not try to suck out the poison or apply a tourniquet, as this will often do more damage than good. Your dog could go into shock, shake, not be able to stand and, in some cases, become unconscious, which can lead to respiratory failure or cardiac arrest.



Monitor them carefully on the way to the vet and try to keep them calm to avoid the spread of the venom in the body. They will be in pain, so be careful as their behaviour may change. Do not give them any tablets, unless advised by your vet when you call them.

Your vet will administer an anti-venom drug and maybe others, such as anti-inflammatory and a drip to add fluids directly into a vein.

It is worth mentioning that the Adder in the UK is a protected species and you should not harm them. If you see an injured Adder or your dog has hurt one, you should report this to an organisation such as the RSPCA. You can find more details on their website at www.rspca.org.uk.

If you come across other snakes, keep your dog away from them and allow them to escape. Although other snakes cannot harm your dog, your dog can harm them if they touch or bite them.

Poisoning

Substances that would appear to be harmless can poison some animals. An example is chocolate, a component of which is theobromine. Dogs process theobromine slowly and this allows it to build up to toxic levels. The level of danger depends on the size of the dog, the amount of chocolate eaten and the type of chocolate; cooking chocolate, cocoa and dark chocolate are more dangerous than milk or white chocolate.

Symptoms

- If a dog has eaten a small amount, the symptoms can include diarrhoea, vomiting or hyperactivity
- Large amounts can lead to muscle tremors, seizures and irregular heartbeat, internal bleeding or heart attack
- Large quantities of grapes or raisins can also be toxic, causing vomiting, diarrhoea, and can result in kidney failure



Always seek urgent professional advice from your vet.

With poisoning cases, make sure the same substance cannot harm you, and phone your vet for advice. Wear gloves to protect yourself against any kind of poison.

Some foods can cause allergic reactions and these will cause respiratory problems. If this happens, you will see swelling in the mouth and neck. This is very serious and can be caused by foods that might be harmless to another animal. If you know your pet suffers from allergic reactions, you will need to take care of what they eat.

Some animals have a more delicate stomach than others and cannot tolerate certain foods. This may not be an emergency if known, but if there are any doubts or it is worse than usual contact your vet.

Dogs are prone to snapping at insects and can be stung in the mouth. This, in some cases, can cause breathing problems as the mouth swells. If the happens, consult your vet.

Burns and Temperature Problems

Firstly, make sure the same thing that has hurt your pet does not burn you. Running cold water for at least 20 minutes will cool the burn. Hair on pets can catch fire easily and prevention is best, so keep pets away from fire and heat sources.

Take care not to cool the burn too much and cause hypothermia, particularly in smaller animals. Electrical burns have other risks and you must make sure the supply is off. There is usually an entry and exit burn, which need to be treated. Serious burns will lead to shock, so look for the signs and advise your vet.

Fly Strike

Fly strike is a dangerous condition where a fly lays its eggs on the animal and these turn in to maggots, which then feed on the animal. It can affect all animals, including rabbits, guinea pigs, cats and dogs, as well as farm animals. It is more common with dirty animals or animals that are unable to keep themselves clean, but even clean animals are at risk. It only takes one fly to lay its eggs for the problem to occur. This sounds like,

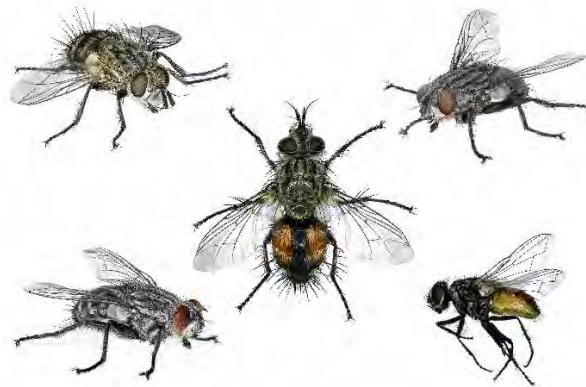


and is, a horrific problem to think about, so it is important to understand the risks. As the fly is attracted by soiled or broken skin, if you can prevent the attractant you will reduce the risk for your pet. It can occur at any time in year, but is higher risk in warm weather. Older animals are at higher risk, as they cannot clean themselves as well, and animals in hutches like rabbits are also high risk if they have stomach upsets and cannot clean themselves.

This condition can be fatal and urgent veterinary care is needed to treat it. You can spot the problem by smell, discolouration of the hair/skin, seeing the maggots on and in the skin, as well as sometimes hearing them. Your pet will try to rub the area against something, scratch it or lick it, or you will see that they are unwell.

You should always make sure your pet is clean and hutch animals should be checked twice a day at higher risk times, as the condition can quickly establish and get worse. Some farm animals can be treated with preventative treatments that reduce or eliminate the risk to the animal. This is common in sheep.

Once treated, the condition usually clears up, but the animal is at higher risk during treatment until fully recovered. Scarring or hair loss is common. The earlier the problem is identified and treated, the better the outcome.



Alabama Foot Rot

Alabama Foot Rot is called that because it was first diagnosed in the US in Alabama and in greyhounds; more so in greyhounds than anywhere else. And this was in the 1980s. Alabama Foot Rot is becoming a problem in the UK. It was first confirmed in 2012 in the UK and since then we have had more cases year-on-year. There is not a clear cause of the Alabama Foot Rot at present. There is a lot of research going into what causes it and the treatment that we can use to treat it as well. But for the moment, it is believed to be related to environmental factors. So, it may be that animals that are going in wet, muddy areas are contracting the causative agent from those areas. But this is not proven and it is just a potential environmental factor. There tends to be more cases between November and May, which is another reason why it is thought to be from muddy, watery, woodland areas.

The causative agent initially causes lesions on the lower part of the foot or the lower part of the leg. So, anywhere from the foot and around the carpus or on the back leg around the hock. These lesions will normally look like ulcers, where the skin is being eaten away. And they can come up very quickly. If you do get ulceration around the lower part of the limb and your pet has been in these environments, then it is a consideration. However, the causative agent of the Alabama Foot Rot will then, or can then, travel to the kidneys and cause fatal kidney damage. This can happen within a day or two of the ulcers appearing on the limb. Therefore, it is always worth getting those ulcers checked out and if we are concerned that it may be the Alabama Foot Rot, then we will be testing to see if it has spread to the kidneys. Unfortunately, treatment is not very rewarding and a lot of these cases, where the Alabama Foot Rot has spread to the kidneys, do unfortunately die.

Blue green algae

Blue-green algae is a potential toxin for dogs and cats. Blue-green algae is found in lakes or ponds, so basically, where the water isn't moving. Blue-green algae is an accumulation of a bacteria and the colour of those bacteria when they clump together has this blue-green appearance and that's why it is called the blue-green algae. It is not actually an algae at all; it is a type of bacteria. It tends to collect in these ponds and lakes when there has not been a lot of rainfall. So, when the water is very still and it is not being washed away, it will tend to accumulate around the edges of the lake or the pond, which is where an animal may go in and have a drink or go swimming. And when they ingest that blue-green algae in the water, it is a very horrible toxin and it travels to the liver and can cause potentially fatal liver damage.

It is really important if you see anything that looks like the blue-green algae not to let your animal drink or swim in that water. Often in parks, there will be signs up, if they know that the algae is present; they will be warning you not to let your pet swim in there. The symptoms would be anything, varies from gastrointestinal symptoms, so vomiting, diarrhoea, not wanting to eat; to respiratory symptoms such as panting, breathing difficulties, fast shallow breathing. Most of the symptoms happen because of the liver failure that the blue-green algae causes. It can affect your pet very quickly. Fifteen to thirty minutes after ingestion of the toxin, you can start to see signs and if it's not treated quick enough, unfortunately, it can be fatal for your pet.

Diabetes

Diabetes is a really common illness that we get. It is a hormonal condition, normally happens around middle age in dogs and cats. And they often get the type 1 diabetes mellitus, which is one where they are insulin-dependent. There are some trigger factors. The predisposing factors could be obesity or poor diet, but in a lot of cases, diabetes will happen even if those are not in play. What we normally find with most of the cats and dogs that are diabetic is that owners will come in reporting that there has been a sudden increase in drinking and then urination as well. The most common is a weight loss as well, that they would have noticed. If it is picked up early, they will not have noticed that weight loss yet and it would be the increased drinking that they first see. And it really is excessive. So, they will go from drinking very little, especially in cats, they do not tend to drink that much. And then diabetic cats, people will have noticed this obsession with drinking from taps, drinking from glasses, both, anything you leave out, they're just trying to get that water.

First thing that is normally done is to have a look at the urine sample and this is something that if you are concerned but you do not want to bring your cat in immediately, you can do at home. You can get a urine sample and bring that into the vets. They can look at that, if there is a sign of glucose on the urine, then they will ask you to bring your cat in for further tests. Same with dogs, bring your urine sample in first and if there is an indication that your dog may be diabetic, then they would need to come in for a blood test to confirm that.

Once we diagnose diabetes in dogs and cats, we would then get them on to daily or twice daily insulin injections. There are different types of insulin and different types of insulin between dogs and cats as well because they both metabolize the insulin slightly differently. It is quite important when you have a diabetic animal to keep in touch with your vet regularly. They will make a plan, but there is so much information that you need to know, that you do need to just keep in contact, just to be reminded of what you need to be doing and write down things, monitor glucose at home through doing glucose urine sticks. Very easily done, you do not need to collect the urine sample, you can even just dip the stick into urine on the floor. Write this down and when you are having your monthly visit with your vet or however frequently it is, you can go through those records and to see if you need to change anything for your pets.

The other thing that is coming into play nowadays is you can also do your own blood sampling at home. You can do a glucometer as you would in a person, do a little prick test to get the blood and to measure the glucose like that. We normally do that on pets' ears because they have some nice little capillaries in their ears that we can get enough blood from to do a glucose reading. Whenever you are testing glucose at home, blood glucose, or even at the vets, they will have specific glucometer monitors to measure that and there will be different codes that calibrate that glucometer. So even between dogs and cats, we have to change the code on that glucometer. We would not recommend you start using a human diabetic kit to try and measure your dog's glucose. Always stick to one that you have purchased from your vet or one that your vet.

Dehydration in pets

Dehydration is where the body gets deficient in water and it can very quickly become a serious condition. Animals can go without food for many weeks but most animals cannot survive without water for more than a few days. Dehydration can come on very quickly, so early identification is vital.

Dehydration can be caused simply by not drinking water but also by some other factors like:

- When they are unconscious
- Vomiting
- Diarrhoea
- Loss of fluids from wounds or burns
- Diabetes
- Being in excessive heat
- Sweating
- Fever
- And many other medical conditions.

The vet would often treat dehydration with the use of intravenous drips where a solution is added directly to the venous system to quickly and efficiently increase their hydration levels. This can also be carried out when they are unconscious.

From a first aid perspective, we cannot give intravenous fluids, so the first thing would be to avoid them becoming dehydrated in the first place by ensuring they have lots of fresh clean water at all times.

You can check the hydration levels in the body by pinching the skin on the back of the neck and it should return to its original position almost instantly. If you can still see the pinched skin for more than 2 seconds after you let go, they are dehydrated and need veterinary attention.

You cannot force an animal to drink so if you are concerned about dehydration, contact your vet immediately. Sometimes adding a flavour to the water may make them drink but be careful about giving lots of milk as this can upset their stomach, giving them diarrhoea, which will make the dehydration worse.

Other things you can do is to eliminate as many of the causes as possible. Things like, not letting them get too hot, treating fevers correctly, feeding correctly and monitoring water intake levels.



Sneezing

When animals have the odd sneeze or sneezing because of something obvious like dust there is nothing to worry about but if the sneezing becomes regular or distresses the animal then it will be worth getting them checked out by a vet as it may be an indicator of a more serious condition.

Different things can cause sneezing and they may be obvious or hidden. Allergies can cause sneezing as does dust, moulds or pollen. Other conditions could be:

- Nasal polyps
- Upper respiratory infections
- Fungal infections
- Dental abscesses

Additional signs that go with sneezing could include:

- Mucus Discharge from eyes or nose which could indicate a respiratory tract infection
- Bloody Mucus could indicate a fungal infection or it could be a warning sign of nasal cancer
- Bad breath could indicate a dental problem like dental abscesses
- Itchy skin and scratching with sneezing may indicate an allergy
- Behaving differently
- Loss of appetite

A vet will look at the signs and then they may give antibiotics to treat infections or decongestants to clear the airways.

Allergies are treated in different ways including removing them from the allergy trigger and using different substances in the home.

Do not get worried and self-diagnosis and think the worse has happened, take them to the vet and wait for their diagnosis.



Weakness and collapse

Weakness in animals can be caused by many different problems, some of which are simple to identify and treat, others that are more complicated. It may be the weakness is caused by pain or trauma, so look at what has happened up to this point, to see if you can identify a cause.

Different infections affect animals, similar to how you would feel weak if you have an infection. It could be an infected injury site, or infections like kennel cough, parvovirus, distemper or heartworm to name a few.

Weakness in puppies and kittens is sometimes caused by hypoglycaemia, or low blood sugar, especially in very small breed puppies like Yorkshire Terriers that are not eating frequently.

Other pets that might be at risk for low blood sugar are those with diabetes that are being treated with insulin. If you suspect your pet's weakness could be related to low blood sugar, offer her some food or rub some corn syrup or maple syrup on their gums.

They should then be evaluated by your vet, but make sure you note if giving sugar improved things as this would suggest low blood sugar was the underlying problem. Low blood sugar is a potentially life-threatening emergency and even if your pet improves after a meal, they should be evaluated.

Weakness may also be caused by other electrolyte disturbances, such as problems with calcium or potassium, particularly in female dogs and cats that are due to give birth or have recently given birth.

Underlying muscular or neurologic disorders may also lead to weakness, these often may have a slow onset that becomes progressively more pronounced, but could also appear suddenly and warrants a trip to your vets.

One of the more concerning causes of weakness is a cardiovascular disorder. An underlying heart disease or problem with blood circulation may be seen as weakness or exercise intolerance. If you notice your pet is weak, take their heart rate, is it faster or slower than usual? This could be a sign of an underlying cardiovascular disorder.

If animals' gums become pale pink to white during a weakness event, which may become even worse with activity, this is more evidence of an underlying cardiovascular problem.

Medications can be the cause of weakness or collapse and this will vary on the drug itself, the type of animal, their size, their allergies and what other drugs they are on that could cause a reaction. Medications are not just oral medications but it could also be things like flea treatments that are applied to the skin.

Human medications can also be a problem and the general advice is never to give human medications to pets unless under the advice of a vet. Accidental consumption of human medications can be reduced by taking care of your medications and keeping them well away from

pets and discarding of them safely. If you think your pet has consumed human medications, talk to your vet or the vet poison line.

Other things that cause weakness or collapse are poisonous foods or plants, tumours, anaemia, chronic or acute diarrhoea to name a few.

If your pet has weakness or collapse, try to keep your pet calm and limit his activity until you can have them evaluated.

Urination Problems

Firstly, it is important to know what is normal for your animal. Like humans, there are many different urinary problems that animals get. Some problems may be temporary and nothing to worry about and others could be life-threatening. The problem with urination problems is that you cannot talk to your pet and ask them what is wrong so you have to look at the signs you see and make a decision.

Straining to urinate or brown urine may indicate they have stones which is something that you need help from a vet. If they strain but nothing comes out this indicates an emergency and as they cannot pass urine this is urgent as they will be in a great deal of stress and pain.

Urinary Tract Infections or UTI's are something you may have heard of in humans. They are not pleasant and they have a variety of different causes and treatments that your vet will advise. If animals whimper or cry when they pee this indicates a problem in their urinary tract. Blood in the urine is a sign that needs immediate vet care as this can indicate UTI or even cancer. Other signs can be frequent urination, pain or discomfort in the abdomen.

In first aid terms, there are no treatments you can offer apart from getting them to a vet. Urinary problems can come on quickly. Male cats are at risk of lower urinary obstructions so they should be monitored more closely.

Excessive urination frequency or an increase in urine volume can indicate Diabetes which your vet can advise on further.

Animals with increase urination or urination problems often have increased thirst by do not restrict their fluid intake as this can lead to dehydration but instead measure what they drink.

Some urinary problems can result in death in a few days but many urinary problems are not immediately life-threatening but they do need sorting by a vet and they can cause a great deal of distress to animals.



Vet poison information line

In the case of animal poisoning, getting the right advice quickly has been difficult in an emergency. There are thousands of poisons and not even a vet is able to know what to do with every substance or whether it is actually a risk.

Vets often use the Veterinary Poisons Information Service as they give advice on what treatment is needed. This service was only available to vets and now it is available to pet owners.

The Veterinary Poisons Information Service has launched a pilot helpline for pet owners. Following feedback from veterinary practices, they created a dedicated number for pet owners, which reflects the different advice a pet owner would need compared to a vet.

The helpline is a triage service, which will let owners know if a trip to their vet is required. They serve as the first point of call for owners concerned that their pet may have been exposed to something that could potentially be poisonous.

The phone line is open 24 hours a day. It is not a free service but the price is low and given the severity of poisoning. Call costs are listed in the download area of this site and as at 2017, the price is £20 from 8 am to 8 pm on Monday to Friday (excluding Bank Holidays), and £30 outside these hours. Owners will not be advised on specific treatment just advice on what to do to get help if required.

The Animal Poison Line number is 01202 509 000.

The poisons line will need to know as much information as possible like:

- The animal's breed, sex, age and any existing medical conditions, weight and name
- What your pet has taken. This can include the product name and any other details of what is in the product
- How they were exposed. This can include how they came in to contact with the poison like eaten or on their skin
- How much they were exposed to and at what time
- Is this a one-off or have they been exposed before?

We have put some leaflets on this service in the download area of the course.



Ibuprofen and pets

Ibuprofen is a painkiller that is available over the counter without a prescription. It is one of a group of painkillers called non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs). It is a popular painkiller used in households and prescribed by doctors for pain relief.

Although generally harmless in humans it can be fatal to pets.

Pets can get hold of ibuprofen by accidentally eating them where left out, dropping a tablet, which is later found by a pet or by giving them to pets thinking they are ok.



When ingested, ibuprofen inhibits enzymes called COX enzymes. These enzymes normally protect the mucosal barrier of the gastrointestinal tract, keep blood flowing normally to the kidneys, and help regulate platelet function.

When these COX enzymes are inhibited, the mucosal lining of the gastrointestinal tract becomes damaged, causing symptoms such as vomiting, often with blood, nausea, diarrhoea, often with blood, intestinal upset and causing gastric ulcers to form.

Reduced blood flow to the kidneys results in kidney damage. Reduced platelet aggregation leads to an increased tendency to bleed abnormally. As the kidneys are damaged other symptoms can show like Increased thirst with Increased urination and Decreased or lack of urine volume.

Other signs are lack of appetite and weight loss, seizures, in-coordination, which can lead to coma and death.

If you suspect or know an animal has consumed ibuprofen, your vet needs to be given the full medical history and they will usually take blood and urine tests to assess any kidney damage and gastrointestinal, renal and neurological signs associated with ibuprofen poisoning in a dog.

The treatment will depend on the amounts and times of consumption. If ingestion has recently occurred, symptoms may not be present. A vet may advise inducing vomiting to remove the tablets from the stomach quickly. Activated charcoal may be used to absorb the ibuprofen poison in the stomach.

When the kidneys have become damaged, fluid therapy and blood or plasma transfusions will be required. Vomiting is controlled by the vet using medications and they may use drugs such as gastrointestinal protectants. Gastric perforation will require surgical correction and if seizures occur, anticonvulsant medications may be necessary.

Prevention is simply to keep all medications safety away from animals.

Bloat

Bloat is a fairly common thing that happens in veterinary practice. Bloat by itself is an emergency, but it is what can happen next that is the true emergency. We call it something called GDV, which stands for Gastric Dilatation and Volvulus. Gastric dilatation is bloat, it is where your stomach, which is basically like a balloon, fills up with air and causes your animal's abdomen to be distended and uncomfortable.

This can happen in any dog but is more likely to happen in a deep barrel-chested dog, so German Shepherds, for example, Great Danes, Weimaraners, anything that has that body shape, where there is space for the stomach to then bloat up, that is where it could happen.

We normally find it happening if an animal has exercised too close to eating, and this can happen either way, so if it has eaten before it exercises or after it exercises, it can still happen. And the reason that happens is because if you have been exercising, you will still be breathing a little bit faster, panting a little bit, so you will be taking more air in when you are eating. Therefore, that air, combined with the food while your stomach is trying to break down the food, will result in a production of more production of gas in the stomach.

What can then happen is if your stomach is dilated, bloated, it can then twist. Like a balloon would float, the stomach can do the same thing. When that happens, that is when it becomes a true emergency. What will happen is, with the twisting, all the blood vessels supplying the stomach will also twist, and then you start to reduce the amount of blood that is supplying that stomach lining, well, the stomach in general. It then could lead to the death of the stomach, so what we would call necrosis of the tissue, and that is when you either have surgery or your dog, unfortunately, will not make it.

Bloat is an emergency and it is always best to get your dog checked out by your vet because it could lead on to this twisting of the stomach, which can be fatal.

In order to reduce the risk of the GDV, the bloat happening in your dog, you want to make sure that you are not exercising them within half an hour, an hour of feeding them. You also want to split, ideally split your dog's meals into two meals a day, rather than just the one, so then they are



having less food in each meal. You also, if they are quick eaters, you would ideally use bowls that would slow down their eating, because the faster they eat, the faster they are getting that air in as well.

There is some controversy over the height of feeding bowls. Some people believe that feeding at height will increase the chance of getting air into the stomach and for the bloat to happen. On the other hand, if you are feeding at neck height, your dog is not having to reach up to their food bowl, so there is not any greater risk of that happening. But if you are unsure, discuss that with your vet and see what the advice is regarding where to feed them.

The other thing you want to do is see if there is any history within that litter of the dogs that you have, any history of GDV happening, because there is a little bit of a, not a genetic component, but it does tend to happen in the same line, so it is worth knowing if there is any familial history of it happening.

In a dog with bloat, the first signs that you may see are unproductive vomiting, so your dog may be trying to vomit and may not bring anything up at all. If they do bring anything up, it tends to be like white foam, but if your stomach is already twisted, then the chances are that nothing will come up at all, but they still will try to bring something up.

They also become quite restless, pacing, because it is very uncomfortable. The most noticeable thing is that their abdomen will bloat up. If you are not sure or you are concerned about this, get a tape measure and measure around dog's abdomen and monitor it that way, and if it is increasing in size, then you know you need to get seen quite quickly. It will lead on to respiratory breathing difficulties, especially if the stomach is twisted, you are going to start symptoms of shock that have been discussed previously. If that is the case, there is just no time to waste, you need to get to your vet really quickly.



Diarrhoea in animals

Diarrhoea can affect an animal at any time and usually, it is not a serious condition and it will clear up on its own.

Diarrhoea can be caused by many different things and it will affect different animals in different ways.

Some common causes are:

- Changes in diet
- Viral infections
- Bacterial infections
- Foreign object has been eaten
- Poisons or poisonous plants
- Intestinal Worms
- Pancreatitis
- Liver disease
- Kidney disease
- Food allergies

Signs of Diarrhoea are loose, watery stools, changes in the colour of stools, increased frequency going to the toilet, straining, loss of appetite, weight loss, vomiting, pain, increase of thirst and they become lethargic. They may also not always make it to the garden or tray and mess in the house.

In many cases, diarrhoea will clear up on its own, in a day or so but it could be a sign of an underlying medical problem so be ready to take them to the vet. Times, where it is worth going to a vet, are if they are very old or young, the condition has gone on for more than a day or two, there is blood in the stools, they are also vomiting or they are in distress.

It is a good idea to take pictures of the diarrhoea to show your vet and also they may want a sample so they can run tests on it.

One thing you should not do is give them human diarrhoea treatments, you will give the wrong dose and often it is best just to let nature take its own natural course and human medications could cause constipation.

If a mild case, you can help them by ensuring they have plenty of fresh water as they will get dehydrated. With-holding food for a day can help them get over the problem or feed them bland food like cooked chicken and rice.

If there is blood in the faeces, this can be a serious concern or it could be something not so serious like animal haemorrhoids. If the blood is fresh, it could indicate a problem in the large intestine or rectum.

Pyometra

Pyometra is a potentially life-threatening condition. This is a disease that can happen in entire females. What happens is, after a season, it can be anything from two to three weeks up to a month or so after the season, the bitch can develop an infection of the uterus. And what happens is the pus... The uterus fills with pus and is essentially a bag full of pus. The problem is that with some of these pyometras, they may not show any discharge. With some pyometras you will see some vulval discharge, and it will be quite a thick, creamy discharge, that will give you a clue that there is an infection in the uterus. However, further on after the season, the cervix will close, and that pus will not be able to come out and show itself as a discharge.

You will get symptoms because the toxins that build up from the pus will start to make your dog unwell. You may see vomiting, diarrhoea, they may go off their food. They tend to get quite a high temperature, so you may get some panting and huffing and puffing, and you will know that they are just not themselves. This is a veterinary emergency because if you do not get this treated that bag of pus can continue to fill and potentially the uterus can explode and the pus will then be in the abdomen and cause Peritonitis. If your pet does get peritonitis, this is when it is truly life-threatening. The infection in the abdomen will cause the peritonitis and it gets absorbed into the bloodstream and into the organs and causes a multi-organ failure.

Stomach conditions

Dogs frequently get stomach upsets. Normally, it is because they are scavengers, and they have ingested something out on a walk, or they have stolen something from home that they should not have eaten, or the owner has knowingly given them something, but they did not realise that it was not good for them. The most common thing we will see is diarrhoea. And then second to that would be the vomiting, but most dogs would present with the diarrhoea or both of them. Once they have that, it is absolutely fine if your dog is otherwise well in himself or herself, to give them some time, starve them, make sure they are drinking, because if they have got the diarrhoea or the vomiting, they are losing fluids and they need to be replacing those fluids, otherwise they will become dehydrated and that is when you really see them get unwell. We would normally say try and starve your animal for 24 hours as long as they are still bright. And if they have still got the diarrhoea after that, then we would suggest taking them to the veterinary to be looked at.

There are some probiotic supplements that you can get from your local vets that may just help bind your dog up a little bit and make them a bit more comfortable. But again, anything past 24 hours, if it is still happening, or if your dog becomes unwell, lethargic, painful, anything that is not normal for them, you should see your vet quite promptly. What you may find in your dog is they may just have very watery diarrhoea, maybe a completely different colour to the normal colour of their faeces. Note all these things because they are the things that your vet will ask you when you go for a consultation. Also notice if there is any blood, and if that is streaks of bloods, or if it is very fresh red blood, or if it is darker, tarry black blood, because that makes a difference to the vet, it

helps them understand where the blood may be coming from, and therefore find out where in the intestine the problem is. Some of those problems may be more serious than others. So, it helps the vet know which direction to go next. The other thing you will also see in a lot of these diarrhoea cases is a jelly or mucous-type consistency. And again, that is important to note because it helps us locate where the problem is coming from.

Nose and respiratory problems

Very similar to many of the other conditions you will get in dogs and cats, you will get infections, you will get irritations, inflammations or tumours of any system. The same applies for the nose. The first thing that we look for as a trauma, so either a grass seed, for example, that has gone up a nostril. Children and dogs, often you will find that they will try and push things up dogs' noses as they would their own noses. So, foreign bodies that could cause irritation or inflammation, that is something that we do find. Then you have an infection of the nostrils, of the upper respiratory tract, which would be nose and throat area as well. We will find discharge in a lot of those cases. And that may be that the discharge is running out of the nose or it might be that it is apparent when they sneeze or when they cough that you will see something come up. Again, smell, like with mouths, eyes, ears, the smell is really important. And if you are smelling something around their nose that is not right, then that is an indication that there is probably an infection or something there that needs to be looked at.

With tumours of the nose, they are not always obvious, initially, because they can grow inside the nose. They can be quite invasive, so what will happen eventually, is they go through the nasal turbinates and out through the nasal bone on the outside, and that is when the owner may have a clue that something is growing there. Prior to something being seen, you may see signs such as sneezing or an irritation, trying to clear their nose rather than a sneeze. And it might be worse after eating or drinking because whatever is growing there may not just be in the nose, it could be invading into the throat area as well. When you get past the throat, we are looking at the trachea and the chest, the lungs. Infection, again, is the most common thing. Pneumonia would be quite a severe infection that you could get. Mostly, an infection would advance on to pneumonia if it was not treated in time. The initial signs of a chest infection would be wheezing when breathing, coughing, the sneezing again. Potentially, you would see some breathing difficulties because of the inflammation in the chest that they would not be able to inflate their lungs properly, and so you would see an increased effort. And you might even see on a dog or a cat that they would breathe from their abdomen, so it would look like they are putting extra effort in from their abdomen.

That would be a sign that something is going wrong there, and could be an infection, could just be inflammation, in the case of something like asthma, or an allergy that they have inhaled, an allergen that they have inhaled that they are having a reaction to. Or again, the thing that we always have to consider, especially as animals get older, that we have to look at tumours of the chest as well.

Hypothermia and Hyperthermia

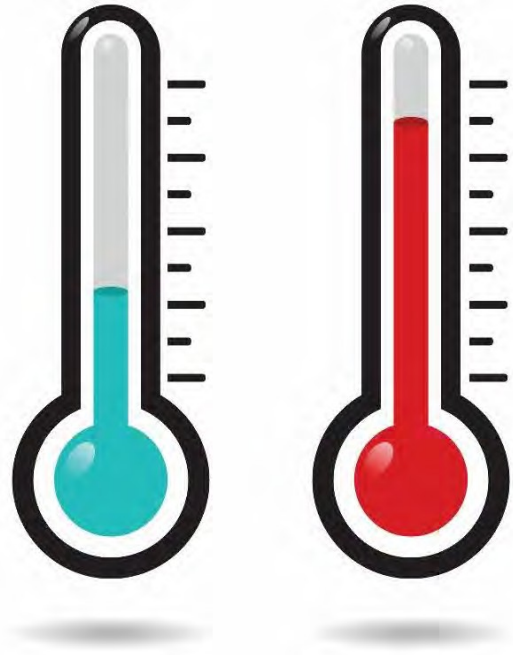
Hypothermia

Pets suffer from the cold, particularly when they are wet. Heat is lost very quickly and they will become sleepy and lethargic. Make sure that you dry them and slowly warm them up. Rapid heating can cause other medical problems, including cardiac arrest.

Hyperthermia

Animals can suffer from heat in the same way as humans, and sometimes worse. This is because they cannot remove clothing and their ability to sweat is limited. Cooling down will help the problem, and always ensure that animal has plenty of fresh clean water.

- Remember that a wet animal will cool faster than dry one
- Never leave a dog in a hot car, even with the window open



Older Animals

Older animals are prone to other problems. They have more difficulty in getting about. Take care as they are more prone to problems like shock and the effects of illness can be more prolonged.

Older dogs are weaker, usually more stubborn and their teeth are sometimes missing and yellow. Hearing and eyesight can also suffer, so you need to be much more sympathetic and make allowances. If they are hurt, they will take longer to recover. An older dog can be knocked over by a younger one and easily hurt.

You may notice a cloudy appearance in an older dog's eyes; cataracts are quite common in older dogs and can cause reduced vision.

Make sure you have your dog checked by the vet regularly, as well as monitoring the deterioration of an older dog's hearing and eyesight to ensure that you can adapt their surroundings accordingly to keep them safe and comfortable.

Remember

- An older dog can be hurt more easily, you need to be extra careful in its care
- Ensure older animals have regular check-ups by the vet

Brachycephalic dogs

In the last few months, there has been a change in the most popular breeds that have been registered with the Kennel Club. Up until recently, Labrador was the most popular, and recently it has now changed to French Bulldog, so we are seeing many more French Bulldogs. With that, we are also seeing other brachycephalic breeds. Brachycephalics are the short-nosed, squash-faced dog breeds such as the French Bulldogs, Pugs, Bulldogs, Chihuahuas to a certain extent, even medium sized nose breeds that have similar problems to these short-nosed breeds.

The problems with them are mainly upper respiratory issues as that they do not have enough space in their mouth. They have elongated soft palates, which means the soft part at the top of your mouth is too long and it hangs down at the back of your mouth. Therefore, whenever they eat or breathe it is getting in the way and that can cause respiratory problems. They also have thickening or pockets around the back of their throats that means that there is not enough space back there. Again, when they breathe, they cannot, especially when they are excited, get enough oxygen in, because there is just not enough space back there. They can have episodes of collapse or respiratory distress because they cannot get enough oxygen when they need it when they are excitable.

They also are more at risk of getting foreign bodies in their eyes or around their nose because they have not got that long nice nose to protect them from. When they are out and about and they are sniffing around in hedges or undergrowth, then seeds or thorns, anything like that, have easier access to get into the eyelid, cause foreign body problems and infections. Same with their ears, they are closer to wherever they are when they are investigating under bushes and that kind of thing. Therefore, they are more prone to getting ear infections because of that as well.

Dental disease, we see quite commonly in these short-nosed breeds because all their teeth are quite squashed in, they sometimes do not grow properly, they can have tooth root problems, they can get food trapped between the teeth that can then lead onto infections. They do need to exercise, but they often cannot exercise as well as they should because of their breathing difficulties. The knock-on effects of that is then a lot of them become overweight and then they can develop overweight problems such as, heart disease, arthritis, anal gland problems. When they are carrying too much weight, on their back legs in particular, because they are very short, a lot of these breeds, their limbs cannot cope and so the arthritic changes and the injuries that they can have to their ligaments and to their patellas, in particular, are quite pronounced and they do happen quite commonly. Lots of things that happen in these shorter nose breeds that we do not see as much, we do still see them in the larger breeds and the longer nose breeds, but they are far more common in these Brachycephalics dogs.



Cats

Cats can be much harder to find when they are hurt, as they tend to hide. Cats also have a habit of not wanting to be held or put in crates to take to the vet.

Take care not to stress cats out and ensure that you do not get scratched. Checks and care of a cat are the same as for a dog, but with CPR you may be able to blow in the mouth and nose as well as seal your mouth around the whole of the mouth.



You still need to calm them and gain their trust. Transport to a vet is best done using a proper cat crate, as this will reduce movement and allow faster and safer transfer.

Remember

- When giving breaths to a cat, you can seal mouth and nose
- Gain their trust
- Cats are harder to hold if you need to apply dressing or treat them
- Take extreme care with dressings when your cat goes outside, as they could get caught on something by the dressing
- Know what is normal for your cat
- Always ensure they have clean litter and look for any differences when they use the tray
- Look out for nose discharge, sneezing, rubbing ears, etc., which could indicate problems
- Cats can run away and hide when they are hurt or unwell, so you may have to look for your cat outside. Take care when you approach
- Car accidents are common, get the cat to a vet as soon as possible
- Look at the claws to make sure they are not damaged
- Seek advice from your vet or pet store if your cat is not eating correctly, it may be that you can change the food
- Cats love playing, but make sure the toys are safe
- All animals should have plenty of clean, fresh water to drink
- Have a look at your cat's teeth to ensure they are healthy and not broken. If you are unsure, ask a cat professional
- Practice putting your cat in its box if you can to make it easier to get it in the box to take to the vet, unless your cat is stressed by the crate in which case you should only use when you have to. Sometimes leaving it out with soft bedding in and the door fastened open might encourage the cat to sleep in the box. Others will just run away as soon as they see it!

Small Animal Care

Small animals are hard to offer first aid due to their size and that their condition can quickly worsen. Depending on the type of animal, applying bandages may be difficult!

Smaller pets like rabbits, hamsters and rats can be hurt as well and treatment can be difficult. With cuts, you need to control bleeding as best as you can. Small animals easily go in to shock and can dehydrate, so prompt attention of a vet is vital. Transport to a vet in an appropriate transport box for your type of animal.

Birds can also suffer injuries; their legs and wings are common injury sites. They may not let you get close, so again transport to a vet for treatment.

With any animal, prevention is better than cure, so spend some time closely looking at cages and hutches to ensure that there are no gaps, sharp edges or any area where they can get hurt. Make sure they always have the correct food and plenty of fresh clean water to prevent illness.

- Get your pet used to being held and learn the best way to hold them
- Ensure you have the correct food and drink for your breed of pet
- Make sure they have adequate bedding and that the material you use is safe and clean
- Be careful of woodchips and sawdust that is not clean
- Ensure the hutch or cage has no sharp edges or areas where they can get caught or trapped
- Avoid feeding them food that is not suitable, as it may poison them
- Groom them where appropriate and keep a close look at their coat
- There are many different breeds of animals now available as pets. When choosing a pet, make sure you do your research and you know how to look after the breed. There are lots of books available from your local pet store or over the internet, as well as breed societies and clubs who can give you advice
- Always ask your vet what vaccinations are needed and make sure they get regular check-ups from a vet to ensure they are in perfect health. It is hard to treat small animals, so make sure you keep them safe, clean and happy.



Puppies and Young Animals

Puppies and young animals are usually more energetic than older animals and are more prone to have accidents. You need to make sure your home and garden are safe places for them to play.

When they get hurt, a bleed can be more serious as they have less blood. Breaks are serious, but as their bones are not fully developed, they are more flexible. Always keep your pet safe and ensure that they have had all the correct vaccinations recommend by your local vet.

Remember

- Young animals may react differently to an accident
- They can lose blood, but the volume percentages of blood loss may be higher and shock is a high concern.
- They may play with toys that they can choke on, chew cables, eat things – they should not be left alone where they could find something dangerous.

There are many books available on puppies and young animals, so do your research to ensure that you choose the right breed, know how big they will get, what temperament they will have and whether they will suit your lifestyle and home.

Get advice from breeders, breed clubs, kennels, vets and pet professionals. They will be able to give you the help you need and tell you if they think the breed is correct for you and what work it will be bringing up the puppy or other young animal.

Finally, there are too many pets in pet's home needing re-homing – consider giving them a home first.



Travelling with your Dog Abroad

It is now more common to travel with your dog abroad due to the availability of dog passports.

You need to check out local potential problems. Ensure that you have investigated any local dangers that may affect dogs, such as insects, snakes or poisonous plants. One example of this is Spain. In some areas of Spain, where there are pine trees, dogs and animals are at risk in winter months from a caterpillar that nests in the trees. These caterpillars fall to the ground and travel in a procession. If a dog comes into contact with the caterpillars and inhales the tiny hairs, they cause an anaphylactic reaction, which can result in death. Initial symptoms include difficulty breathing.

Most pet owners in these areas have antihistamines prescribed by their vet; these must be administered immediately prior to veterinary care. Avoiding areas where there is a high density of pine trees is highly advisable, but care needs to be taken in all areas where there are pine trees at this time of year.

It is always advisable to give your dog bottled water to avoid possible stomach upsets, as tap water is different in different areas. This can be the same for humans.

- Make sure the dog's paperwork is correct, otherwise you may not be able to bring your dog back into the UK
- Have copies of all the paperwork and pet passports
- Check out whether there are any risks where you are going
- Make sure you know local vet's contact details
- Make sure you can understand the vet, so have a phrase book, etc.
- Have a pet first aid kit
- Always carry plenty of water for your dog, ideally bottled water.



When you want to travel with your pet or if you are moving, ask your vet now. It can take months to get the correct passport for your pet. If you do not have the right paperwork, you may not be able to bring them back to your country.

Sand-flies and Leishmania (not in UK)

The sand-fly is not a problem in the UK, but is a problem in some Mediterranean countries, and is a particular problem in countries like Malta, Greece, Italy, Southern France and parts of Spain, to name a few. When you travel with your pet, you must make sure you know all the local risks.

The sand-fly is a carrier for a parasite called leishmaniosis, which is a problem to dogs and sometime humans, and is carried in the stomach of the sand-fly. The sand-fly is yellow-ish in colour (sand colour) and about 1-3mm in size, making it difficult to see. It feeds like a mosquito, finding a small patch of skin to suck on the blood of the host, passing on the infection. It feeds every 10-20 days and is active during warm sunny nights. It is not a powerful insect, not being able to fly higher than about one story on a house, but needs to be controlled. It breeds, unlike a mosquito, on dry organic material and not near water, so it is safer by the sea.



Dogs are at a high risk when they are sleeping, as a walking dog is harder for the fly to rest on. It is important to ensure that you get professional advice on the best treatment to repel the sand-fly. Putting a fan over where your dog sleeps will help, as the fly cannot rest to feed with the air movement, therefore protecting your dog, but use this with a commercial product.

Leishmaniosis is always passed to the dog by the sand-fly and is a severe, often fatal, condition in dogs. If a dog is infected, it is difficult to treat or cure, but there are drugs that a vet can inject into the vein of the dog if caught early enough. The definite way of knowing that your dog is infected would be by tests carried out by your vet.

The signs you are looking for are loss of hair, particularly in the area near the eyes and nose, and then it spreads to other parts of the body. The dog may have dry skin with dandruff, and soars and ulcers are common on the head and legs. Other signs include weight loss (but appetite is usually fine), kidney failure, eye problems, nose bleeds and claw problems.

Treatment for prevention can include impregnated collars, spot-on treatments and avoiding sand-flies during the summer months.

This is not as fatal to humans and can usually be treated if found in time.

Who to Call in an Emergency?

As there is no ambulance service for animals, we need to be prepared by planning now who to contact in an emergency and be ready to know where to drive. Add the following information to this book or enter the details in your family members' mobile phones, so the information is to hand for everyone.

Vet's phone number	
Vet's name	
Address of vet, including postcode (think about programming to your Sat Nav)	
Alternative vet's details	
Poisons advice number	
Pet shop's number in case you need something	
Friend or family who could help	
Pet's microchip numbers	
Details of pet's medications	
Notes	

Summary

If you have completed our online course, you will be able to download and print your completion certificate online as soon as you passed the test. If you have completed a classroom course, you will receive a ProTrainings wall certificate and wallet card like the below image in the post after the course.

If you require any further assistance or would like information on this or any ProTrainings course, email support@protrainings.uk or call 01206 805359.

We hope that you have enjoyed your course. For more information about other courses available, please visit www.protrainings.uk.

Remember

- Classroom students will receive a wall certificate and wallet card through the post
- You can opt to receive a weekly video pet first aid email
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- Check our propetfirstaid.co.uk website for more pet information regularly

This course is aimed at giving you more information, but make sure you always consult a qualified vet with any injury or illness.



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