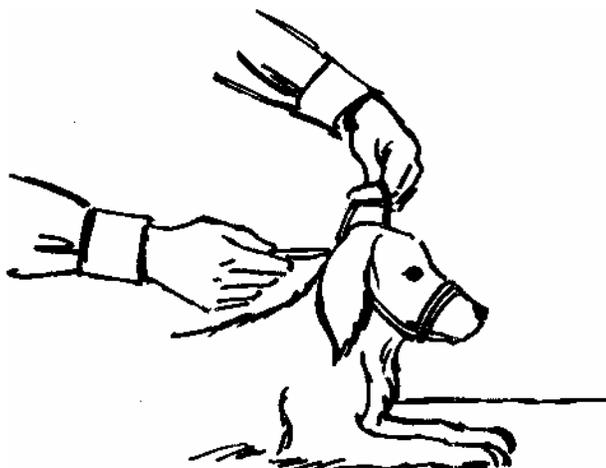




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## First Aid For Dogs

The purpose of this article is to give you help quickly in an emergency. Whether your dog is a purebred or mixed breed, companion, field or show dog, there may come a time when it is not possible to get the services of a doctor of veterinary medicine immediately. Accidents can occur at unexpected times and in remote places and knowledge of what to do until you reach the doctor may save your dog's life. Bear in mind, however, that "first aid" is only a step prior to proper diagnosis and skilled professional treatment.



### Restraint

Your dog may be your best friend and docile as a lamb but when frightened and in pain he may not recognize you. So any time you are handling an injured or panic-stricken animal you should use some means of restraint to keep him from biting while you try to help him. The "emergency muzzle" or mouth-tie is the easiest way. Use bandage or a strip of cloth two or more feet long (a necktie, cloth belt or even a piece of rope may be used). Tie a loose knot in the middle, making a large loop. Hold the ends up, one in each hand, and slip the loop over the dog's nose, bringing it back behind the soft part of his nose. Then quickly pull the ends so the loop tightens into a knot over his nose, thus making it impossible for the dog to open his mouth. Next bring the ends down and under his chin, making a knot there, then bring back, an end on each side of his face under his ears, and tie them together behind his head. In the case of short-faced dogs, the tie around the nose can be kept from stopping their breathing by taking one end after tying behind the head and bringing it down the middle of the face, slipping it under the muzzle tie, bringing it back over the head and tying to the remaining end behind the head. If the dog tries to pull off the muzzle with his paws, tie his front feet together. Instead of muzzling, small or short-faced dogs can be wrapped in a blanket or coat, covering their heads, to prevent them from biting. Because a dog perspires through his tongue, do not leave the mouth-tie on any longer than necessary.



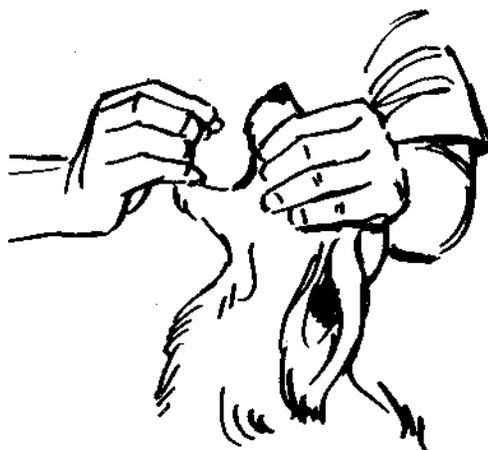
### **Pressure Bandage**

Place a thick layer of gauze directly over the wound and wind a bandage tightly over the injured area. Although some blood may discolor it, the bandage should be tight enough so that blood does not drip through. Remove it every 15 or 20 minutes so as not to cause undue swelling beneath. On an injured foot, the pressure bandage may be left on longer, a half hour or so.



### **Giving Liquids**

To give liquids to a dog which cannot drink from a dish or to force him to take liquid medicine, use the lip pocket method. Hold the dog's head up, put your fingers in the side of his mouth and pull out his lower lip to form a pocket. Then pour or spoon the liquid into this pocket, keeping the dog's head up. It will run between his teeth and back so that he swallows it. The plastic vials in which pills are dispensed by the druggist are ideal for pouring liquids using the lip pocket method.



### **Giving a Pill or Capsule**

Put the palm of your hand over the dog's muzzle with your fingers on one side of his jaw, your thumb on the other. Press his lips hard against and in under his teeth. At the same time, use your other hand to pull down his lower jaw and drop the pill or capsule as far back as it will go on his tongue. Then, with your first two fingers push it down over his tongue and toward his throat. Quickly close the dog's mouth and hold it shut until he swallows. Watch a few moments to make sure he doesn't regurgitate it.



### **Making a Tourniquet**

Use a bandage, handkerchief, cloth belt or a piece of cloth and tie the ends around the limb in a loose loop. Then insert a stick in the loop and twist it tightly enough to stop the flow of blood. *But, when using a tourniquet, always remember that it must be loosened every 15 or 20 minutes.* (This permits some blood to flow so that circulation does not stop entirely).



### **Carrying An Injured Dog**

Since accidents are apt to happen in the field or woods or an area equally distant from your car, your home or a place where you can get help or find a telephone, you may have to carry a badly hurt or unconscious dog.

Although a flat surface, such as a shutter or a couple of large boards fastened together, makes the best stretcher for an injured dog to be rolled onto, it's rarely possible to have such a commodity at hand. An improvised stretcher can be made from a blanket or a pup tent or, if necessary, a coat. If knots are tied in each corner and a strong branch or pole inserted in the knots on each side, any strong cloth can serve very well, providing you have a companion to hold one side. If you are alone and have to carry a large dog, stoop down with your back toward the dog and put him on your shoulders, holding his feet in front.

### **GIVING FIRST AID FOR ...**

**Shock.** A state of shock may follow any severe fright or injury. The dog



may be completely prostrated or in a condition of nervous excitement. The symptoms of shock are weak pulse and shallow breathing. The eye will have a "glassy" look due to dilation of the pupil and, usually, the gums are pale. Keep him as quiet as possible. Avoid noise or talk that might prompt him to try to move. In cool weather, cover him with a blanket or coat to keep his body warm and at an even temperature. A dog in shock should be taken to a veterinarian as soon as possible since the administration of intravenous fluids and drugs may mean the difference between life and death.

**Bleeding.** From superficial skin injuries, if it seems really necessary, wash with soap and water and apply an antiseptic. Sometimes washing can contaminate the wound even more. If the wound is jagged or gaping put gauze over it, holding it in place with adhesive tape and get the dog to a veterinarian as stitches may be needed.

**Severe or Deep Cuts.** If an artery has been severed, the blood will be bright red and flow irregularly, in time with the heart beat. Blood from a vein will be a darker red and flow evenly. To stop bleeding from an artery, pressure must be applied between the heart and the wound so as little blood as possible can run out. Use a tourniquet between the cut and heart when bleeding is from an artery. To stop bleeding from a cut vein, apply pressure or tourniquet below the wound. Remember that a tourniquet must be released every 15 minutes or so. If a tourniquet cannot be applied (for a head wound for instance) a pressure bandage should be used in its place.

**Internal Bleeding.** Even if there is no apparent injury after an accident a dog may be hurt internally. If he is weak or prostrate and if his gums are pale grey in color you can be fairly sure that he is hemorrhaging internally and will die if he doesn't get veterinary treatment as soon as you can manage it. Keep him as quiet as possible and carry him carefully on an improvised stretcher. If there is bleeding from the nose but no apparent damage to the nostrils, it may mean a head injury. If there is bleeding from the mouth, inspect his tongue and inside of his mouth for cuts.

**Broken Bones.** Usually self-evident. Intense pain and inability to stand or use his leg or legs are indications. In a compound fracture, the bone will protrude through the skin. *DO NOT TRY TO SET IT.* If a leg is broken, keep it in position as well as you can. Use a temporary splint to prevent the sharp edge of the bone from cutting into a blood vessel. If the pelvic area, shoulder blade or rib cage is affected, do not try to bandage. Keep the dog as immobile as you can and carry him on a stretcher.

**Sprains** and other injuries to muscles and ligaments are often hard to distinguish from broken bones. The affected area is swollen and tender. Emergency treatment consists of keeping the dog quiet, applying an emergency splint if



convenient and taking him to the veterinarian as quickly and with as little movement as possible.

**Dislocations** are most frequent in the hip, knee, toe and jaw. There is loss of movement and swelling. The affected limb may be held unnaturally. Do not attempt to replace the bone as you may cause additional damage to the surrounding tissues. Apply cold compresses to relieve pain and take the dog to the veterinarian. The sooner the joint is reset, the less severe the after effects will be. Prolonged delay may make it impossible to reset the dislocation by manipulation.

**Burns.** For a small burn caused by fire or heat a pain killing household burn remedy may be used. If the burn is caused by an acid, apply a solution of bicarbonate of soda or similar alkali in moist form. If the dog was scalded by boiling water, douse liberally with cold water immediately and if the burn was caused by a caustic, use vinegar. Seek professional help immediately for any burn more severe than a small spot and keep the area from becoming contaminated.

**Heatstroke.** This not only happens when a dog is exposed to the sun overlong or exercised hard in hot weather but very often when a dog is left in a car in hot weather with little or no ventilation. Symptoms are lying prone and breathing with difficulty. To save his life, reduce his body temperature immediately by placing him in a tub partially filled with cold water or by turning the hose on him.

**Drowning.** All dogs can swim but some aren't proficient and even the strongest swimmer can drown if he becomes exhausted. A dog may fall or get into a steep-sided pond or a swimming pool where he can find no foothold to pull himself out. To revive, first hold the dog up by his hind legs at the hocks to get excess water out of his lungs. Then give artificial respiration. Lay him on his side and push down on his rib cage, releasing the pressure rhythmically every four or five seconds. If you have a companion, have him take a turn. Keep it up with regularity. As long as there is a heart beat there is hope. Aromatic spirits of ammonia held under the dog's nose may help to revive him. When he revives, wrap him in a blanket or coat to keep him warm.

**Poisoning.** A dog can be poisoned by anything from rodent bait to garbage. Symptoms are retching, pain, trembling and sometimes convulsions. Speed is imperative. Force the dog to vomit by giving him equal parts of hydrogen peroxide (3%) and water by the lip pocket method about 2 tablespoons for each 10 lbs. of his weight; or if you have no peroxide, use a strong salt solution (4-6 teaspoonsful to a glass of water); mustard mixed with water, or put a couple of teaspoons of salt on the back of his tongue. After he has emptied his stomach, give him white of egg or milk and rush him to your veterinarian. Find out what the poison was, if you can, for then the doctor can best advise the antidote. Consider



the poisons the dog may have reached...ant or roach poison? Plant or lawn spray? Spoiled food in a garbage incinerator or can? Poisoned bait for foxes? If you can offer a clue it will be a big help. There are some poisons which cannot be treated at home, even if you have the antidote. With strychnine, for example, your dog may have to spend many hours under the veterinarian's care before danger is past.

**Running Fits.** In this type of fit, the dog runs in wide circles, and acts as if he is about to have convulsions. Wait until he falls, then act fast. No matter how gentle he is normally, put on an emergency muzzle then leash him. If he can be covered with a coat, so much the better. When he comes to he may not recognize you and, unless he is held on a leash, he may start running again.

**Foreign Objects.** Sometimes a dog swallows a stick, a stone or a sliver of bone which lodges in his throat. He will cough and choke, paw at his mouth and shake his head. Open his mouth and look inside...at his tongue, on top and underneath, at his gums and teeth, especially at the roof of his mouth (the hard palate) across which a short piece of bone or root can be lodged. Pull his tongue out, holding it with a handkerchief to give purchase, and look down his throat. If you see the object and it isn't too deeply imbedded, pull it out with your fingers or tweezers. If it is imbedded deeply, the veterinarian will have to get it out. If the object has gone past his throat, it's best to let your veterinarian decide on the method of treatment. Persistent vomiting is the cardinal symptom of a foreign body lodged in the intestinal tract. When a dog shows this symptom a veterinarian should be contacted without delay.

**Eyes.** Inflammation, cuts, scratches. Wash eyes with an eye lotion or boric acid solution; apply yellow oxide of mercury (1%) or a similar eye ointment. Using water alone can be irritating to the eyes.

**Porcupine Quills.** Hunting dogs or dogs on vacation in the country can get into all kinds of trouble. The porcupine is one enemy. The quills should be worked out gradually, not yanked out. It may take two people to hold the dog as this is a painful ordeal for him. If you are alone, grip the dog between your legs, as each movement he makes may work the barbs in deeper. Use a pair of pliers and slowly twist out each quill, starting with those in the chest area as these may work through the skin into the vital organs. Then pull out those around the face. The quills can be softened and removed more easily by applying vinegar to them. Put any standard antiseptic into the wounds. But as soon as you can, get the dog to a veterinarian. He will put the dog under an anesthetic to complete what would otherwise be a long and painful process. Veterinarians living in areas inhabited by porcupines usually have had experience in removing quills with the least possible pain or discomfort to the dog.

**Skunks.** Inquisitive dogs and those that overestimate their prowess in battle



are always getting sprayed by skunks. First, wash the dog's eyes well with a boric acid solution and give him a bath with soap and water. Then stop at the nearest grocery and get a few large cans of tomato juice and give him another bath...in tomato juice. It may not counteract the odor entirely but it will help. Diluted lemon juice also cuts the odor. \*

**Fish Hooks.** Careless people leave them around on shore or docks and dogs sometimes get them in their feet or mouths. With a pair of pliers, cut off the barbed end of the hook so it can be pulled through, or, if more convenient, cut off the eye end so that you don't have to pull the barb back through. Staunch the wound with gauze and apply an antiseptic.

### **In Conclusion**

When you are using first aid remember the old proverb "a little knowledge is a dangerous thing." It's important to recognize your own limitations in knowledge and ability. Don't try to be an amateur practitioner and use first aid as a treatment .. follow up with a visit to your veterinarian, no matter how trivial the incident may seem. A dog can be seriously hurt internally (from a fall or being struck by a car) and not show a sign of it until a day or so afterwards when he may suddenly begin to hemorrhage.

You may have saved your dog's life by your quick action in an emergency but extensive damage may have been done which you are not trained to recognize. Your dog should always have a check up by your veterinarian.

First aid is for emergency. It's good to know .. but we hope you will never have to use it.

\* NOTE: There is a product called "Odor-Mute" which completely removes skunk odor. It is available at pet shops.



# **Quick Reference Chart**

*CAUTION: These are not treatments. They are emergency first aid measures only.*

Problem	Symptoms	First Aid
SHOCK	<i>Nervousness or prostration. Weak pulse. Shallow breathing. "Glassy" eye. Pale gums</i>	Keep quiet. Discourage movement. Keep comfortably warm. May accompany any injury or severe fright. Take to veterinarian as soon as possible.
BLEEDING	<i>SEVERE OR DEEP CUTS Severed artery, blood bright red, flow irregular. Severed vein, blood dark red, flow steady. INTERNAL BLEEDING Weakness, prostration. Gums pale grey.</i>	Apply: Tourniquet between wound and heart if artery; Tourniquet on other side of wound from heart if vein; Pressure bandage if tourniquet is impossible. Pressure must be released every 15-20 minutes. Keep quiet as possible. Carry carefully on stretcher. Possible even when no injuries are apparent. Take to veterinarian as soon as possible.
BROKEN BONES OR DISLOCATIONS	<i>Inability to stand or use leg or legs. Intense pain.</i>	Keep in position as well as possible. Use temporary splint for leg bones only. Immobilize, carry on stretcher. Do not try to set a broken bone yourself. Do not try to bandage or splint pelvis, shoulder blade, ribs. Take to veterinarian.
BURNS		Small, caused by fire or heat. Apply pain killing household burn remedy. Acid. Apply solution of baking soda or similar alkali in moist form. water scald. Douse liberally with cold water. Caustic. Apply vinegar. In all cases when more than a small area is burned, take to veterinarian.
HEATSTROKE	<i>Lying prone, difficult breathing.</i>	Place in tub partly filled with cold water. OR douse water on him. It is essential to reduce body temperature as quickly as possible.
DROWNING	<i>Unmistakable</i>	Hold up by hind legs to remove excess water. Lay on side and perform artificial respiration. When revived, keep warm. As long as there is a heartbeat, there is hope.
POISONING	<i>Retching, pain, trembling, convulsions.</i>	Cause vomiting by giving: Equal parts hydrogen peroxide (3% ) and water, 2 tbs. for each 10 lb. body weight. OR 4-6 tsp. salt mixed in a glass of water. OR mustard mixed with water. OR a couple of spoonfuls of salt on back of tongue. After stomach is empty, give egg white or milk. Take to veterinarian as soon as possible. Try to find out cause of poisoning.
RUNNIG FITS	<i>Running in wide circles. Acting as if ab out to have convulsions.</i>	Act quickly as soon as dog falls. Tie on emergency muzzle, then leash. Cover if possible. Hold leash to prevent resumption of running. Muzzle essential no matter how gentle dog usually is. May not recognize you.
FOREIGN OBJECTS	<i>Coughing, choking, pawing at mouth, shaking head — lodged in throat. Persistent vomiting — lodged in intestinal tract.</i>	Open mouth, look at tongue, under tongue, gums, teeth, roof of mouth. Hold tongue with handkerchief to look down throat. If possible remove object with fingers or tweezers. If deeply embedded, veterinary care is necessary.
EYES	<i>Inflammation, cuts, scratches.</i>	Wash with eye lotion or boric acid solution. Apply yellow oxide of mercury (1% ) or similar eye ointment. Plain water may be irritating to eyes.
PORCUPINE QUILLS	<i>Unmistakable, dog in pain.</i>	Hold dog between legs or have second person hold. Slowly twist out each quill with pliers. Start in chest area. Applying vinegar softens quills.
SKUNKS	<i>Eyes usually get sprayed and dog paws at them.</i>	Wash eyes well with boric acid solution. Wash as soon as possible with soap and water or tomato juice or diluted lemon juice if available. If only soap and water are handy for first wash, use juice for second bath to reduce odor.
FISH HOOKS	<i>Usually in lip, mouth or foot.</i>	Cut barb or eye end of hook with pliers. Work hook out. Never try to pull barb back through flesh.