

HOW TO TREAT MINOR ILLNESSES AND INJURIES

Reminder: NEVER try to home remedy these conditions:

- any pet with blood loss that cannot be controlled with light pressure
- a pet who is unresponsive, unconscious or extremely lethargic
- a pet whose gum color is white, blue, purple, or bright red
- a pet who is straining to urinate and cannot produce urine
- a pet that is in pain that lasts longer than 15 minutes
- a pet that has a seizure (ictal phase- tremors, etc.) that lasts more than 5 minutes
- any pet that has a head injury, or traumatic injury where you suspect internal bleeding
- a pet that drinks antifreeze needs to be treated immediately
- any scratch or injury to the globe of the eye (the "eyeball")
- vomiting or diarrhea that is continual, vomiting even water

USE GOOD JUDGEMENT- Some injuries and illnesses can be monitored at home safely for the evening/weekend and can be evaluated during normal working hours. Please use this information as a guideline before administering care and/or medications. Also remember, if you have questions you can always CALL the emergency clinic at 896-0902. We learned in veterinary school that "Cats are NOT small dogs", and the same holds true that "Pets are NOT small people". Each animal is unique and processes medications differently than people. **Do not self-administer your own medications to your pet!**

VOMITING/DIARRHEA

It is very common for dogs and cats to have bouts of vomiting or diarrhea, especially when they are young and have a tendency to be indiscriminate eaters. Simple things such as stress, change in diet, or intestinal parasites can cause vomiting or diarrhea.

General guidelines for treatment are:

No food for 12-18 hours after last vomiting episode (water is ok unless your pet is vomiting that as well, then take the water away too)

Offer a small amount (1/4 cup) of water and/or bland food- meat flavored baby food, boiled white rice (plain or with chicken broth or a small amount of lean chicken) and watch for signs of vomiting.

If no vomiting, offer small, frequent meals of a bland food for the next 24 hours, then gradually reintroduce their regular diet.

For diarrhea, you can give DOGS (not cats) 1 Imodium tablet for every 60 pounds of their body weight. (A 30 pound dog gets 1/2 tablet) ONE time.

If your pet vomits again after re-introducing food, then hold them off food for another 8-12 hours then try again.

If your pet begins to act lethargic, continues to vomit, especially vomiting water, or seems painful in the abdomen, it needs to be seen by a veterinarian. Potential illnesses include intestinal obstruction (eating toys, rocks, etc.), viral infections such as Parvovirus, severe intestinal parasite infection, or pancreatitis. All of these are potentially fatal and may require surgery or hospitalization for treatment. Repetitive bouts of mild vomiting or diarrhea can be caused by food allergies, pancreatic insufficiency, or irritable bowel. These conditions are treatable, but need to have diagnostic tests run to accurately diagnose these diseases, then they can be treated appropriately.

ACUTE LAMENESS

Acute lameness can be caused by many different things, but usually from an overuse or sprain/strain injury just like in people. If there is an open wound, abundant bleeding or swelling, or obvious fracture, your pet needs to be seen immediately. If not, let your pet rest quietly for a few minutes and see if the lameness continues. Evaluate the toes and foot pad carefully. Ripped toenails, scrapes or cuts on the pad, or small objects, splinters, etc. stuck in the foot can be very painful. You can gently move each of the joints so that you may get a feel for where the injury is located. Most dogs have injuries in their knees, hips, or shoulders. **If your dog is comfortable, you may give it one coated aspirin (Ascriptin) for every 60 pounds of body weight every 12 hours.** The dog should be kept

quiet and not allowed to overuse the leg for one week. NO playing ball, long walks, etc. If you do not notice improvement daily, or the dog seems painful even with the aspirin, it needs to be seen. Your dog may need radiographs or maybe just stronger pain medication.

Cats usually have lamenesses from an abscess on a limb. Almost always when we are presented with a lame cat, it has a fever, and most times we can find an abscess that needs to be treated. Not that cats can't have broken limbs, strains, sprains, and the like, but they are seen less often than seen in dogs. **You may give your cat 1/2 baby aspirin, but it can't be given again for 3 days.** (It works for 3 days though). NO TYLENOL. We recommend that all cats be evaluated in case they need abscess care or antibiotics.

SKIN SCRAPES/HOT SPOTS

Skin wounds on dogs and cats are common. In the summer time, it is common for pets to get raw areas from allergies, skin infections and licking. These places can be treated easily at home, especially if they are localized.

If there is bleeding, put gentle pressure on it until it stops.

Clip the hair off the area using electric clippers.

Clean the area with hydrogen peroxide.

If you have a veterinary medicated ointment apply that to the area twice daily.

If you do not have a veterinary ointment, you may use Neosporin.

You can give your pet one adult Benedryl tablet (25 mg) for every 25 pounds body weight two or three times daily, as needed for licking or chewing at the site. For easier dosing of small pets, you can use the liquid children's Benedryl which is 12.5 mg for every tsp. (tsp= 5 ml; 6 pound dog gets 1/2 tsp or 2.5 ml)

If you suspect a bite wound from another pet or animal, or if the area is draining any discharge, it should be seen by a veterinarian. Your pet may need to be put on antibiotics or stronger anti-inflammatories.

RIPPED TOENAIL/CUT TOENAIL WHILE CLIPPING

This is a VERY COMMON occurrence in dogs and cats. If you accidentally "quick" your pet's toenail while trimming them you can apply gentle pressure with a tissue or cloth. You can use baking soda or powder, or flour from your kitchen to apply to the nail until the bleeding stops.

Any toenail ripped or cracked at the base will be very painful and may bleed- sometimes LOTS! If you have pet nail trimmers available, you may try to cut off any broken pieces of toenail. Most times, however, the fleshy part of the toenail is also involved, and this is VERY uncomfortable for your pet. Usually we have to anesthetize the animal, cut back all tissue to the base of the toenail, and place a bandage on for a few days, as well as administer antibiotics to prevent infection. You may clean the area with some hydrogen peroxide, apply veterinary or human triple antibiotic ointment, then gently apply a small bandage around the foot until it can be seen by a veterinarian.

BEE STING/ ALLERGIC REACTION / ALLERGIES

During the summer time, curious dogs get bee stung on a frequent basis, especially on the nose. Usually, this is not a life-threatening event for your pet, more of a nuisance for them. You will notice your pet pawing at his/her face, or any part that may have been stung. Most times their muzzle and lips will swell, and you may also notice puffiness around the eyes. Rarely is the swelling so severe that it constricts the airways, but if you have access to veterinary care quickly, an injection of Benedryl works the fastest. If not, **give your pet one adult Benedryl capsule for every 25 pounds of body weight orally, then repeat in 8 hours if necessary** (see **Skin Scrapes/Hot Spots** above for more dosing instructions). If the swelling persists or you think your pet is uncomfortable, or **having difficulty breathing, please seek immediate care.**

Some pets have allergic reactions to vaccinations, which can be quite severe and life-threatening. Signs include facial swelling, pawing at the face, hives, wheals, red skin, or pacing. If your pet has been vaccinated within

the last day, please give Benedryl (doses above and in the Skin Scrape section), then if the condition persists more than an hour, see your veterinarian. If at any point your pet is having difficulty breathing, vomiting, or seems to be weak or unconscious, seek immediate care. For mild reactions that you do not have to seek medical assistance, please remember to call the office so that we can put an alert on his/her medical record.

Cats that have vaccine reactions tend to have severe, immediate vaccine reactions - usually before you leave the office. If your cat exhibits these signs, especially vomiting- IMMEDIATELY return to the hospital.

Other allergic reactions are milder and can result from something they ate, or something they have come in to contact with. Food allergies can cause vomiting and/or diarrhea. Obviously, if you can isolate the problem, don't feed it to them again. See the **Vomiting/Diarrhea** section for care. Contact allergies to things like wool bedding, shampoos, and sometimes even flea preventatives and the like usually irritate the skin locally. The skin may be itchy, red, or have hives. Rinse the area well to make sure all the irritant is gone, and give some oral Benedryl (see above for dosage) or if a small enough area, apply some hydrocortisone ointment every 8 hours as needed.

Dogs and cats can be highly allergic to fleas. There are treatments now that are fast and effective, and very convenient- one dose on their skin can last for one month, AND should help break the flea's life cycle. There is a huge difference between the types of products sold at our hospital and those you can buy over the counter. Call for information before purchasing an over the counter product. PLEASE make sure your product is labeled for cats before applying to your cat, because we see many very sick cats that have been accidentally treated with DOG Hartz flea preventative.

Lastly, pets can have seasonal allergies such as people, but exhibits as itchy, red skin for your dog or cat. These allergies can show up when your pet is 1-3 years old, and tend to get worse annually. You can give your pet Benedryl (see first paragraph in this section for dosing) to relieve their itching. Other things that are helpful are baths in oatmeal based shampoos, Omega-3 fatty oil supplements, or bathing your pet's feet after playing outside (this prevents them from licking their feet, ingesting more allergens and persisting the problem.) We recommend scheduling an appointment if your pet is chewing raw places on their skin, constantly scratching and the Benedryl is not helping, or if they have had allergies in the past and you are seeing signs of allergies start up again. Sometimes if you can start them on antihistamines early, it will prevent future problems. Also, some pets will develop ear infections or skin infections secondary to their allergies, and these need to be treated with antibiotics or sometimes even prednisone.