

Veterinary Specialty Center of Tucson is here to serve you and your pet's emergency and critical care needs 24 hours a day, 365 days a year!

4909 north la cañada drive • tucson, az 85704
phone 520.795.9955
www.vscot.com

PET EMERGENCY CARE

[What to do when emergencies happen]

When it can't wait until tomorrow...



We at the Veterinary Specialty Center of Tucson are dedicated to the special healthcare needs of your pet.

This booklet has been created to help you cope with a medical emergency involving one of your pets. Please call VSCT at 520.795.9955 to request additional copies of this booklet or to answer your questions.



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❁ HOW TO USE THIS BOOKLET

This booklet is intended to help you deal with emergency situations that arise with your pet. It is not intended to replace professional veterinary care. The information presented will help you handle your pet's condition well enough to get them to a veterinary clinic for an exam and further treatment. The best way to manage an emergency is to be prepared — know where to take your pet and what numbers to call when you have questions. Research this information now (before you need it) and write it in this booklet.



❁ HOW TO APPROACH AN INJURED ANIMAL



Approach the animal slowly while talking in a calm, soothing voice. ALWAYS muzzle an animal in pain or have someone restrain the head before examining the injured area. Try to assess the nature of the emergency as quickly as possible. Use the information in this book to help stabilize and transport the animal. Call a veterinarian as soon as possible and seek professional care for your pet immediately.

❁ FIRST AID KIT

Carrying a few basic items can ease the stress of simple emergencies when away from home. Start with a small collection of the following:

1. Tweezers
2. Sterile saline (*contact lens solution*)
3. Roll gauze and gauze sponges
4. Adhesive tape
5. Antibiotic ointment
6. Nylon leash
7. Latex gloves



❁ HOUSEHOLD MEDICATIONS

DO NOT give your pet any medications (Advil, Tylenol, aspirin, etc.) without checking with a veterinarian first. Many human drugs are toxic to animals and could preclude use of important medications to help your pet.



❁ ABDOMINAL PAIN

Signs: Whining, listless/restless, lethargic, arching back, unable to get comfortable, vomiting/ diarrhea, bloated or distended abdomen.

Action: DO NOT give your pet food or water — this may induce vomiting and make the condition worse. Abdominal pain can be very serious and is often life threatening if not addressed. Limit the activity of your pet, carry them if possible. You can put small pets in a box or carrier. Call a veterinarian immediately and seek professional help as soon as possible.



❁ ALLERGIC REACTIONS

Signs: Fever, vomiting/diarrhea, hives, scratching, chewing at feet, swollen face or puffiness around eyes, trouble breathing.

Action: Call a veterinarian immediately. Allergic reactions should be treated as soon as possible to prevent shock. An exam by a veterinarian should still be performed on your pet, even if the reaction gets better. Allergic reactions can result from a variety of causes including insect bites or stings, food reactions and environmental issues.

❁ BITE WOUNDS

Action: As always, approach the animal slowly. Injured animals often communicate their pain through aggressive or defensive actions. MUZZLE the animal or have someone restrain the head. Examine the entire animal for bleeding, lacerations or pain. Multiple bite wounds can be hard to find under thick coats and even bite wounds that appear superficial can cause extensive internal injuries (snake and spider bites are particularly dangerous). Seek veterinary care IMMEDIATELY — bite wounds often need to be flushed extensively or sutured to help prevent infection. Wounds that are managed within 6 hours require less intensive care. If you cannot quickly reach help, flush each wound with saline (clean water will do). Wrap large wounds, small wounds can be left uncovered. DO NOT use tourniquets to stop bleeding — use firm pressure if needed.

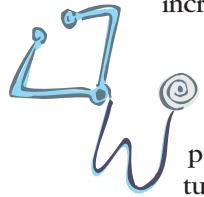


* BURNS

Action: First aid for chemical, electrical or thermal (heat) burns. Immediately flush the area with cool water for 5 minutes. After flushing, apply a cold compress to the area for 10 to 15 minutes. NEVER apply the ice pack directly to the skin. Wrap the pack in a thin towel or available material. Call a veterinarian immediately and seek professional help and examination. Burns need to be addressed immediately and can be life threatening when severe.

* CARDIAC EMERGENCIES

Signs: Collapse, weakness, bluish or gray gum color, rapid/slow heart rate, increased respiratory rate or respiratory distress.



Action: Call and seek veterinary care immediately. Such emergencies should not be taken lightly as they are often life threatening. Limit your pet's activity, carry them if possible. If your pet stops breathing or loses consciousness, turn to the pet CPR section pg. 11.

* COLD EMERGENCIES

Signs: Shivering (excessive, relentless), lethargy, weakness, inability to use limbs.



Action: Bring your pet in from the wind and cold into a warm place. Wrap your pet in warm (woolen) and dry blankets or clothing. DO NOT rub your pet with the blankets, this can damage cold tissue and make frostbite worse. Try to raise your pet's body temperature slowly over the course of 20 minutes. Hot water bottles (wrapped in towels to avoid direct contact with skin) can be used under the blankets to help increase your pet's temperature. To take your pet's temperature, use only an approved rectal thermometer. Normal temperature should be 100 to 102.5°. If an area is discolored (bluish or pale), the body part or skin may have been frozen and is exhibiting signs of frostbite. Take the animal out of the cold and transport to the nearest veterinary hospital. DO NOT use electric heat in any form!

* DIARRHEA



Action: A few episodes of diarrhea can be due to stress or change in the animal's diet. Make sure that your pet continues to drink water. If the diarrhea persists for more than 24 hours, seek veterinary care immediately. If your pet is showing other signs of illness (vomiting/lethargy/weakness) do not wait, seek veterinary care. Diarrhea can often be a symptom of more serious illness or disease.

* EAR EMERGENCIES

Signs: Scratching at ears, shaking head, whining, head tilting, swollen/puffy ear flap, strange odor or discharge from ear(s).

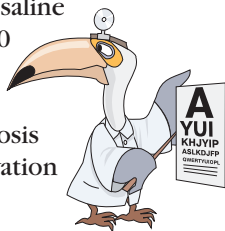
Action: MUZZLE your pet or have someone hold the mouth closed while you examine the ears. Look for signs of redness, swelling of the ear flap, discharge or unusual odor. Look for any obvious foreign body (plant material, etc.) and pull it out if possible. If the signs of ear problems persist, call a veterinarian and have your pet seen as soon as possible to obtain the appropriate solution. If your pet is experiencing frequent ear infections, please discuss this with your veterinarian as there are usually underlying causes, such as allergies. Try to prevent your pet from scratching at the ears or shaking the head excessively as this can make the problem worse. Always avoid getting water in your dog's ears. Ask your family veterinarian for an 'drying' agent if your pet loves playing in water.



EYE EMERGENCIES

Signs: Squinting, discharge/tearing, redness, swelling, bleeding, different pupil size.

Action: If there is an obvious laceration or foreign object in or around the eye, seek veterinary care immediately. DO NOT try to bandage the laceration or remove the object. If the source of the irritation is known to be chemical or fine debris/dirt, flush the eye(s) with sterile saline (or clean water) immediately for 5 to 10 minutes and then seek veterinary care. Eye injuries and infections can get worse very quickly. IMMEDIATE diagnosis and treatment is critical in the preservation of your pet's eyesight.



FRACTURES

Signs: Pain, not using a limb, limb looks bent or swollen.

Action: MUZZLE the animal or have someone restrain the head. Check the limb for open wounds or bleeding. If excessive bleeding, apply pressure with a towel or other available material while trying not to move the limb. DO NOT pull on the limb in an attempt to align the fracture, such action can result in further injury and increased bleeding. Stabilize the limb as best as possible (carry your pet if possible) and seek professional help immediately. DO NOT give any pain medications to your pet (some are toxic to animals) unless instructed to do so by a veterinarian. Avoid wrapping the leg, as it is easy to impede blood circulation.



HEAT EMERGENCIES & DEHYDRATION

Signs: Excessive panting or salivation, lethargic, unable to stand, lack of coordination, vomiting, diarrhea.



Action: Move your pet to a cool area as soon as possible. Keep them calm, DO NOT try to get them to stop panting, this is how your pet expels heat. If water is near by, encourage your pet to stand or lay down in cool water. Put small amounts of water on the tongue, or offer them ice cubes. If not vomiting, your pet should respond rapidly (10 to 15 minutes). If your pet does not respond to the cooling therapy, loses consciousness, has great difficulty breathing, or the skin on the back of their neck does not spring back to normal position immediately when pulled, seek veterinary care right away. Dehydration of any cause can lead to other medical problems. Potential heat stroke victims should be seen by a veterinarian. Also, light colored animals can get sunburned just like people. Encourage them to stay in the shade and ask your veterinarian for a recommendation on sunblock for your pet.



INSECT BITES & TICK REMOVAL

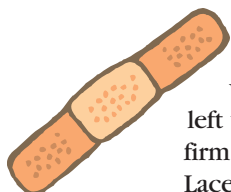
Action: Like people, animals vary in their reactions to insect venom. The response can range from mild irritation to allergic shock. Check the area for any remaining stinger or insect, remove them and cleanse the area with soap and water. Cool wet towels or gauze can be used (for 20 to 30 minutes) to soothe the area. Watch your pet for signs of allergic reaction (see allergy section and follow the instructions if needed). Be particularly mindful of difficulties breathing.



When returning from a park or a hike, check thoroughly for ticks by running your fingers through your pet's entire coat, and inspecting the paws, pads, between toes and inside floppy ears. If you find a tick, place a small amount of tick spray (alcohol, mineral oil or petroleum jelly can also be used) on a cotton ball and hold it over the tick. Typically the tick will back out in 30-60 seconds allowing you to grab it with a tweezers and dispose of it. Apply alcohol or an antibiotic ointment to the site of the bite.

LACERATIONS

Action: As always, approach the animal slowly. Injured animals are often aggressive or defensive. MUZZLE the animal or have someone restrain the head. Examine the entire animal for bleeding, lacerations or pain. Multiple lacerations can be hard to find under thick fur. Flush each laceration with saline (clean water will do). Wrap large lacerations, small wounds can be left uncovered. DO NOT use tourniquets to stop bleeding, use firm pressure if needed. Seek veterinary care IMMEDIATELY. Lacerations can involve extensive internal damage and often need to be flushed extensively or sutured to help prevent infection.



NEUROLOGIC EMERGENCIES

Signs: Inability to use limb(s), unable to stand, circling, seizures, head tilt, abnormal behavior.

Action: Seek veterinary care as soon as possible, neurologic disease is difficult to treat and is often very serious. If your pet is unable to walk, carry them to the car. If they are too big to carry, use a towel (under the abdomen, in front of rear legs) to support the hind end or use a heavy blanket as a stretcher to carry them to the car. Professional diagnosis and treatment is recommended as soon as possible.



POISONINGS

Signs: Disorientation, vomiting, seizures, weakness, retching, salivating (excessive).

Action: CALL a veterinarian immediately. If the source of the poisoning is known have the container with you when you call. You will need information on the packaging to determine the appropriate treatment. If the source is unknown, seek emergency assistance IMMEDIATELY. Anti-toxin treatment should be started as soon as possible to minimize absorption of the poison. If professional medical help is unavailable, veterinary POISON CONTROL offers assistance at (888) 426-4435 for a \$50 fee. Please make a note of the case number provided by poison control, your veterinarian will need it for reference. If possible, bring the toxic agent with you to the doctor.



RESPIRATORY EMERGENCIES

Signs: Collapse, weakness, bluish or gray gum color, labored, rapid or shallow breathing.

Action: Call and seek veterinary care immediately. Such emergencies should not be taken lightly as they are often life threatening. Look for any foreign object in your pet's mouth that may be obstructing the airway. ONLY try to remove the object (with tweezers or pliers) if it is COMPLETELY stopping your pet from breathing. If they can still pass some air (wheezing) get them to a veterinary hospital as soon as possible. Limit your pet's activity, carry them if possible. If your pet stops breathing or loses consciousness, turn to the pet CPR section pg. 11.



SEIZURES

Signs: Shaking (uncontrollably), tremors, strange facial movements, unable to stand, paddling (swimming action) with paws, loss of bowel or urinary control.

Action: DO NOT try to restrain your pet during an episode. Move objects away that may cause injury during the seizure. CALL a veterinarian immediately. Try to get your pet to the veterinary hospital as soon as possible.

SKUNK RECIPE

Signs: Awful smell and burning of the eyes.

Action: Put on goggles or other eye protection. In a bucket mix:
1 quart of 3% Hydrogen Peroxide
1/4 cup baking soda
1 teaspoon of hand-safe dishwashing liquid



Stir ingredients briefly. The solution will fizz as the hydrogen peroxide decomposes and releases bubbles of oxygen. Have a friend hold the smelly pet in a washtub while you scrub in the solution with a soft brush. Rinse the pet with tap water. You may need to repeat treatment on your friend.

URINARY EMERGENCIES

Signs: Frequent urination or straining, blood in urine, difficulty urinating, vomiting.

Action: Animals can develop urinary blockage and infections just like people. Once you have detected the signs of a problem, CALL your veterinarian and take your pet in as soon as possible. The problem most likely has been going on longer than you realized. DO NOT wait and observe the pet to see how they do.



VOMITING

Action: Look for signs of foreign material or strange food in the vomit. When you call the veterinarian, let them know of any recent history of your pet eating foreign objects or new foods (trash). Rest the stomach for 4-6 hours by offering no food and water. Then try small amounts of water and bland food every two hours. If there is no further vomiting, you can return your pet to a normal diet. If the vomiting persists, or your pet has unproductive vomiting (retching) or abdominal distension, see your veterinarian immediately.

TOAD POISONING

The Colorado River toad is a large amphibian that typically comes out after the rain, during the monsoon season. These toads have skin glands that secrete a neurotoxin. Mouthing or ingestion of these toads can cause a mild to severe toxicity in dogs and cats.

Signs: Playing with a toad Weakness
Mouth irritation Collapse
Excessive drooling Vomiting
Seizures Diarrhea



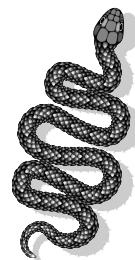
Action: If a pet is observed playing with a toad, rapid intervention by the owner is necessary. The first step is to wash the pet's mouth out thoroughly with water. While rinsing your pet's mouth, take care to use a gentle water pressure and point the stream of water across the mouth. Do NOT point the water flow toward the back of your pet's mouth to avoid inhalation of water resulting in aspiration, pneumonia or drowning. Once you have rinsed your pet's mouth, seek care from your primary or emergency care veterinarian as soon as possible.

SNAKE BITES

As the weather begins to warm up in the desert of the Southwest, snakes begin to come out of hibernation. Although snakes hibernate during the winter months, they also come out on warm winter days. Snake bites are one of the most serious hazards your pet may face. Snake bites are usually triggered by your pet's aggressive, playful or curious behavior. Dogs are more likely than cats to be attacked, with most of the strikes hitting the muzzle. Cats are prone to being struck on the forelimbs, while pawing and batting at the snake.

Signs: Rapid swelling at the site of the bite Rapid breathing
Intense pain Pale gums
Puncture marks from fangs Weakness
Oozing blood Collapse
Drooling

Action: After a snake bite, keep your pet calm. Limiting his activity may reduce the effect of the bite. DO NOT apply a tourniquet, which can cut off blood circulation and seriously injure tissue. Do not try to suck the venom out of the bite, as the site will be extremely painful and you could be injured by your pet or cause serious infection from harmful bacteria in human saliva. Do not try to give your pet any pain medications (*human medications can be toxic to animals*), tranquilizers or ice treatments.



If you know your pet has been bitten by a snake, see your primary or emergency care veterinarian immediately. The treatment for snake bites is most effective within four hours of the bite. The amount of venom varies, from bite to bite and there is no way to tell how much was injected. The risk of toxicity depends on the size of the animal bitten and the amount of venom injected. The majority of snake strikes are severe enough to require emergency treatment. Antivenin is usually recommended to neutralize the venom. Your pet will also be treated for pain and infection, and may need to be hospitalized if the bite is severe. Pets that have received the snake bite vaccination are not completely protected and still require emergency treatment by a veterinarian.

Snake Bite Prevention

Control your dog on a leash while out walking.
Do not allow your dog to explore holes or dig under rocks, logs or planks. Stay on open paths where snakes are more visible.
Don't walk at night; snakes are nocturnal most of the year.
If you hear a snake, keep your dog at your side until you locate the snake, then move away.

TOXINS (COMMON HOUSEHOLD ITEMS)

There are several items commonly found in many households that are toxic to pets. Make certain that these items are removed from ALL areas to which your pet has access.

1. Antifreeze (ethylene glycol): Pets love the sweet taste. The ingestion of a small amount can be fatal as the antifreeze will cause neurological and kidney damage. Signs of poisoning include staggering, lethargy, excessive drinking and seizures. An antidote exists but must be given soon after ingestion. Sierra brand antifreeze is non-toxic to pets.
2. Snail and Slug bait: signs include nervousness, hyper-excitability, drooling, tremors, rapid heart rate, seizures.
3. Chocolate: Candy chocolate usually causes only GI upset. Baker's or bittersweet chocolate is much more toxic, and if ingested, will cause nervous stimulation, tremors, rapid heart rate and seizures.
4. Rat Poisons: Some rat poisons cause bleeding whereas other cause severe neurological damage.
5. Acetaminophen (Tylenol): Causes red blood cell and liver damage, especially in cats.
6. Plants: There are many potentially toxic plants to pets. Some cause only mild gastrointestinal upset, whereas others can cause severe organ damage. Some common plants that may be toxic to pets include:
 - Easter Lily, Tiger Lily: Kidney damage to cats, GI signs
 - Rhododendron: GI upset, slow heart rate and shock
 - Dumbcane, Dieffenbachia: Intense burning and swelling of mouth and tongue
 - Mistletoe: GI upset, liver damage
 - Oleander: GI upset and heart damage
 - Castor Beans: Sever GI upset
 - Rhubarb: Neurologic disease
 - Iris: GI upset
 - Larkspur: GI upset and neurological stimulation



VITAL SIGNS

Taking a Heart Rate or Pulse:

The heartbeat of a dog or cat can be felt at about the point where the left elbow touches the chest (about the 5th rib). Place your hand or stethoscope over this area and count the heartbeats.

Pulses can also be felt with a light touch on the inner thigh approximately half way between the front and back of the leg, just below the wrist on the front legs or just below the ankle of the rear legs.



Normal Heart and Pulse Rates at Rest:

Small breed Dogs (< 30 lbs.): 100-160 beats per minute.
Medium to large breed Dogs (30+ lbs.): 60-100 beats per minute.
Puppy (until 1 year old): 120-160 beats per minute.
Cats: 130-220 beats per minute.

Normal Breathing Rates:

Dogs: 10-30 breaths per minute and up to 200 pants per minute.
Cats: 20-30 breaths per minute. (Note: Panting in a cat can be a sign of serious illness and requires immediate veterinary attention.)

Normal Temperatures:

Dogs: 100°-102.5° F **Cats:** 100°-102.5° F

Disclaimer:

The information contained in this booklet is meant to be used only as a general guide for the care of your pet. In case of an emergency involving your pet, a veterinarian should ALWAYS be consulted for recommendations specific to your pet's illness. VSCT and the hospital supplying this booklet disclaim any responsibility for mistreatment of your pet that arises from the improper use of this booklet.



❁ ARTIFICIAL RESPIRATION

Check the airway for any foreign objects and then gently hold the muzzle sealing the mouth and lips with your hands. Forcefully blow air into the animal's nose. Give four or five rapid breaths and then check to see if the animal begins breathing without assistance. If not, repeat until you reach a veterinary hospital or for a maximum of 20 minutes.

❁ PERFORMING CPR

DO NOT assume that there is no heartbeat or pulse simply because an animal is not breathing. Do not start chest compressions before checking for a heartbeat. If the animal is conscious and responds to you, then the heart is beating.

Small Dog (< 30 lbs.) or Cat:

Lay your pet down on its right side with the chest facing you. Kneel and place the palm of one of your hands over the ribs at the point where the elbow touches the chest. Place your other hand underneath the right side. With your elbows softly locked, compress the chest 1/2 to 1 inch. If working alone, perform 5 chest compressions for each breath (see above) for five rotations and then check for pulse. If there are two people, have one perform the compressions at a rate of three compressions for each breath, then check for pulse.

Medium to Large Dog (30-90 lbs.):

Stand or kneel with the animal's chest towards you. Extend your arms at the elbows and cup your hands. At the point where the left elbow lies when pulled back to the chest, compress the chest about 1 - 3 inches. If working alone, perform 5 chest compressions for each breath (see above) for five rotations and then check for pulse. If there are two people, have one perform the compressions at a rate of two or three compressions for each breath, then check for pulse.

Giant Dogs (90+ lbs.):

Use technique for medium to large dogs but do ten compressions for each breath and then check for pulse.

❁ TRAVELING WITH YOUR PET

1. Have your veterinarian examine your pet prior to traveling to make certain he or she is physically able to handle the associated stress.
2. Familiarize yourself with any related restrictions or requirements imposed by airlines, hotels, and destination sites prior to traveling.
3. Remember to pack your pet's food and supplies (leashes, medications, water dishes, bedding, and litter).
4. Make certain that your pet is wearing identification tags at all times in case he or she becomes lost. Permanent identification microchips that are injected under the pet's skin are available from most veterinarians to be used to identify lost pets. Also carry a photo of your pet with you. Bring this emergency booklet, a first aid kit, and the phone number of your veterinarian in case an emergency should arise.
5. Dogs should not be allowed to stick their head out of a car window as flying debris can damage their eyes. To prevent escape, never leave the car window low or the door open when driving with your pet. Never transport your dog in the back of an open pickup truck. Never leave your pet unattended in a parked car especially on hot days when heat stroke can occur.
6. When you arrive at your destination, evaluate your pet for illness or injury. Seek veterinary advice immediately if something seems wrong.



Leaving Your Pet at Home:

If someone is taking care of your pet while you are away, be certain to leave a phone number where you can be reached as well as the phone number of your veterinarian and VSCT. Make certain the pet-sitter is aware of any health issues. Finally, "owner absentee form" which notes financial limitations (available at VSCT and on our website at www.VSCOT.com) should be signed and made available to the pet-sitter in case you are not available when an emergency occurs.

✿ IMPORTANT NUMBERS FOR YOUR PET

Veterinary Specialty Center of Tucson: 520-795-9955
ASPCA—Animal Poison Control Center: 888-426-4435
Arizona Poison and Drug Information Center: 800-222-1222

✿ DOG PARK ETIQUETTE

1. Keep your eyes on your dog. Mischief can happen quickly.
2. Never leave your dog unattended.
3. Be sure your dog's vaccinations and license are up to date.
4. Always clean up after your dog.
5. Do not take puppies younger than four months.
6. Do not take more than three dogs to the park at one time.
7. Keep your dog on-leash until you get to the off-leash area.
8. If your pet becomes unruly, leash the dog and leave immediately.
9. If you take children to the dog park supervise them closely.
10. Always observe all of the rules posted at the dog park.



✿ WE'RE HERE FOR YOU

Just as your family physician may suggest that you see a specialist to investigate a problem or receive a special treatment, your family care veterinarian may suggest that your pet see a veterinary specialist. Veterinary Specialty Center of Tucson offers a team of board certified veterinary specialists for your pet's specific medical needs.

Our Comprehensive Services Include:

- 24 Hour Emergency & Critical Care
- Surgery
- Internal Medicine
- Dentistry
- Neurology/Neurosurgery
- Radiology
- Dermatology
- Dentistry/Oral Surgery
- Ophthalmology
- Behavioral Medicine
- Integrative Medicine and Rehabilitation Therapy
- Valley Fever Center for Excellence

Veterinary Specialty Center of Tucson is here to serve you and your pet's emergency and critical care needs 24 hours a day, 365 days a year!

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IMPORTANT PET INFORMATION:

Guardian Information

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Email _____
Name of Pet _____
Breed/ Species _____

In Case of Emergency (If Guardian Unavailable) Please Notify:

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Phone # _____ Cell # _____

Pet Statistical Information

Birth Date/Adoption Date _____
Pet Obtained from _____
Location _____ Date _____

Sex Male Female Weight _____ lbs ____ oz
 Spayed/Neutered Unaltered

Color _____
Markings _____

Microchip I.D.

Chip I.D. No. _____
Model/Manufacturer _____
Phone # _____
Email/Web _____

Veterinarian

Name _____
Clinic Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Phone # _____ Emergency # _____
Email/Web _____