

CANINE: EMERGENCIES

Most emergency situations require veterinary attention. Here a few tips to help you stabilize your pet before you get professional help.

Bleeding Most cuts are superficial and not life threatening. Many times all you need to do is place pressure over the injured area for several minutes until the bleeding stops. If the blood is bright red, spurting, or won't stop, the situation may be life threatening. This could mean there's damage to an artery and your pet could lose a lot of blood. In these cases seek veterinary help immediately. In the meantime keep pressure on the wound to control the bleeding.

Unconsciousness Your response depends on the cause.

Choking: A foreign body lodged in the throat can make it difficult or impossible for your dog to breathe. The lack of oxygen will cause your pet to become unconscious and start to turn blue. Quick action is essential. You can attempt to dislodge the foreign body by positioning yourself behind the dog, wrapping your hands around the abdomen and compressing the chest, similar to performing a Heimlich maneuver on a person. This is an attempt to use air in the lungs to force the foreign body out of the trachea.

Drowning: Lift the hindquarters over the head and squeeze the chest to force any liquid out of the lungs.

Electric shock Do not touch the pet until you have disconnected the source of electricity. Once the electricity has been turned off, determine if the pet is breathing. If the pet is not breathing attempt CPR.

Heatstroke This problem usually occurs during the summer when the pet is left in an unventilated area in direct sunlight. Since dogs do not perspire, they can easily become overheated. If this occurs, first get your dog to a cooler shaded area. Bathe the dog in cool, not cold, water until the temperature drops to 103 degrees Fahrenheit. Once the temperature drops seek veterinary help immediately.

Insect bites This is another common summer problem. If there's just local swelling, you can apply a cold compress to the area. Some dogs will have a severe reaction and their whole face swells up. They may even have difficulty breathing. Seek veterinary attention immediately.

Vomiting Since most dogs are indiscriminate in what they will eat, an upset stomach can be a common occurrence. If the dog vomits more than once or twice, there may be a problem. Examine the vomit for blood or evidence of a foreign body. If you suspect the animal may have gotten into poison identify what it is in contact your veterinarian. Withhold food and water until you get help.

If the dog is retching but not bringing anything up, the situation may be life threatening. Contact your veterinarian immediately.