

Pet First Aid Situations You May Encounter While Out on the Trail

Top 6



Insect Bites, Stings & Allergic Reactions

Can be caused by ants, bees, hornets, wasps, and spiders. Dogs are inquisitive and get into colonies or holes where these insects live. The biggest danger is a severe allergic reaction. Unless you observe the pet being stung or bitten, you may not be immediately aware of what is going on. Your first sign may be incessant licking and scratching and then upon investigation you find localized swelling, redness and pain at the injury site. Actions for Survival include immobilization and reducing the pet's activity to keep them from spreading the toxin further. Treat symptoms as they present and keep the pet comfortable, which is also code for under control. Before this happens, is the time to consult with your vet on what the proper dosage of antihistamine would be for your pet. Pet Tech recommends that you purchase "Benadryl" (diphenhydramine) in the gel caps in the blister packaging (the generic version of this is fine too). Then tape a safety pin on the back with the dosage for your pet (that you got from your vet) written on the tape too. Then carry that in your pet first aid kit. To administer, use the safety pin to just poke a hole in the gel cap and squeeze proper dosage into pet's mouth.

1

Insect Bites & Stings



2

Poisons, Toxins & Parasites



Poisons, Toxins & Parasites

Dogs are inquisitive in nature and will follow their nose wherever it takes them. Some dogs will eat anything once and sometimes twice! So, you have to be careful not to leave your dog unattended. Certain plants can be lethal if ingested. Exposure to or ingestion of contaminated water, poisonous plants, mushrooms, infected animals and parasites can be dangerous for your dog. The signs of poisoning can vary but usually include the following: diarrhea, vomiting, stomach upset, excessive salivation, breathing difficulties, excitability, loss of consciousness and seizures. For this type of situation you need to act quickly because time is your biggest enemy. Your dog can deteriorate quickly to no breathing and no heartbeat. You will also need to identify the following: suspected substance, time exposed and sample of the vomitus or stool, if available. Contact the nearest veterinarian or emergency center for any pre-hospital care and transport immediately.

3

Snakebite



Snakebite

Snakebites are very dirty wounds. Whether the bite is venomous or non-venomous, the pet needs wound care and antibiotic treatment. Signs include 1-2 puncture wounds, severe pain, swelling and bruising. If the snake is venomous, then immediate actions for survival include restraint, muzzling (only if no breathing difficulties), treat for shock and transportation to the nearest animal hospital that has antivenin. If you live in a snake-infested area, then you may want to have a conversation with your vet on treatment for snakebite with antivenin. Prevention is key. Keep dogs on a leash or at a minimum under visual control when out on the trail. You may also want to research snake avoidance training.

Pet First Aid Situations You May Encounter While Out on the Trail (cont.)



Exposure To Extreme Temperatures

Heatstroke can be caused by pets being in confined spaces with little or no ventilation or water (think car), warm weather with high humidity, over exertion and stress. Dogs cool themselves by panting, passing cooler air over their gums and tongue. Short-nosed breeds (i.e. Pekinese, Boxers, Pugs) are more susceptible to overheating as their “radiator” (mouth and gums) are too small for their body size. Signs of heatstroke include uncontrollable panting, foaming at the mouth, rapid heart rate, vomiting, lethargy, the tongue initially bright red and a capillary refill longer than 2 seconds. Actions for Survival: include

restraining and muzzling, bathing or hosing down with cool water, treating for shock, monitoring the temperature and contacting/transporting to the nearest pet emergency hospital.

Frostnip is a first degree (superficial) cold injury that does not cause tissue damage. Frostbite is a third degree (deep) cold injury causing localized tissue damage. Areas most commonly affected are the ears, paws, scrotum and tail. Cold injuries are caused by extreme and/or prolonged exposure to low temperatures. Signs include swollen, red, painful, hard and/or pale skin. In later stages, the pet may lose skin and hair in the affected area. Prevention is best. Make sure you monitor the pet and do the Snout-to-Tail Assessment after each hike to make sure there aren't any ice crystals, snow etc. in the pads, paws and genitals. Actions for Survival include: Frost nip parts should be warmed slowly with wet warm towels. Do not squeeze or rub the affected area as this will be extremely painful for the pet. Frostbite requires immediate attention by a Veterinarian or Emergency Animal Hospital to prevent further pain, ward off infection and to assess possible permanent tissue damage. Keep body parts frozen during transport.

Extremity Injuries

Limb injuries can include anything from an abrasion on the paw to a compound fracture to scratches and scrapes on the legs and paws. Most of these injuries are preventable with proper care and handling of your dog. The most common will be injuries from over exertion such as strains, sprains, muscle and tendon tears, swelling, etc. Signs may include limping, favoring one limb over another, obvious pain or limited range and use of movement of extremity. First aid objectives for cuts, lacerations or abrasions is simple wound care and bleeding protocols below. For sprains, strains, fractures or other skeletal injuries you would need to immobilize, reduce activity and make arrangements to transport to the nearest animal hospital or veterinarian.

Wounds & Trauma

Including bites, cuts, lacerations, punctures, falls or blunt force trauma. First aid actions include muzzling, restraint, controlling bleeding and treating for shock. Depending on the severity of the injury, the pet may need veterinary care, including stitches and medication to treat possible infection. X-rays could be warranted if any sudden blunt trauma was involved. Bleeding injuries can be life threatening and require immediate attention. Actions for survival include: restraint and muzzle, elevation if it does not aggravate any injuries, direct pressure, constricting hand/band, bandaging and transporting to the nearest animal hospital or veterinarian.

Top 6

4

Extreme Temperatures



5

Extremity Injuries



6

Wounds & Trauma



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