

INDEX

DISCLAIMER	1
IMPORTANT INFORMATION	2
PREVENTION BETTER THAN CURE	3
SYMPTOMS THAT REQUIRE AN EMERGENCY VET	4
GENERAL SYMPTOMS AND THEIR CAUSES	5
CARDIO PULMONARY RESUSCITATION (CPR)	8
MOTOR VEHICLE ACCIDENT	9
PAIN MANAGEMENT	10
INDUCE VOMITING	11
BANDAGING	12
BITE WOUNDS	15
BLEEDING	16
BURNS	18
DEHYDRATION	19
DIARRHEA	20
EAR INFECTIONS	21
FISH HOOK	22
FRACTURES	23
HYPERTHERMIA – COLD	24
HYPOTHERMIA – OVER HEAT	25
POISONING	27
PUPPIES / KITTENS	28
SEIZURES	30
SHOCK	31
SNAKE BITE	32
TORN NAIL	33
VOMITING	34

DISCLAIMER

All information provided on or through this book is provided for informational purposes only, is not a substitute for professional veterinary advice, care, diagnosis or treatment, and is not designed to promote or endorse any veterinary practice, program or agenda or any medical tests, products or procedures. This book does not contain information about all injuries or diseases, nor does this book contain all information that may be relevant to a particular medical or health condition. You should not use any of this information provided for diagnosing or treating a medical or health condition. If your pet has or suspect that your pet had a medical problem, you should contact your professional veterinary provider through the appropriate means.

YOU AGREE THAT YOU WILL NOT UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES DISREGARD ANY PROFESSIONAL MEDICAL ADVICE OR DELAY IN SEEKING SUCH ADVICE IN RELIANCE ON ANY SUCH INFORMATION PROVIDED THROUGH THIS BOOK. RELIANCE ON ANY SUCH INFORMATION IS SOLELY AT YOUR OWN RISK.

YOU AGREE TO CONSULT YOUR VETERINARIAN BEFORE BEGINNING ANY COURSE OF TREATMENT.

ISBN 978-06-620-52953-2

COPYRIGHT 2012 SUSAN HOLDSWORTH

First edition MARCH 2012

No part of this book may be reprinted or reproduced or utilized in any form or by any electronic, mechanical, or other means, including photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system without permission from the author.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

NAME OF YOUR PET

BREED

WEIGHT / AGE (YEAR)

VACCINATIONS UP TO DATE

MICROCHIP NUMBER

KNOWN ALLERGIES

MEDICAL HISTORY

REGULAR VET NAME

ADDRESS

EMERGENCY AFTER HRS NUMBER

NEAREST VETERINARY HOSPITAL - TEL NO

ADDRESS

PREVENTION IS BETTER THAN CURE

Many of the diseases and disease syndromes discussed in this guide can be prevented with sound vaccination schedules as well as sterilization of non breeding animals. It is generally accepted that a vaccination schedule for kittens/puppies should begin at 6 weeks of age, and then be repeated at 3 to 4 week intervals until 12 to 14 weeks. A repeat booster is given once the kitten/puppy is one year old and thereafter between yearly and three yearly (to be discussed with your veterinarian). Breeding establishments may want to contact their veterinarian with respect to specific vaccination schedules and may consider the parvo virus vaccination as early as 4 weeks of age.

The vaccines are either considered to be “core” (essential in your area) or “non core” (will vary depending on the region). It is generally accepted that in most provinces of South Africa the core vaccines are – parvo virus, distemper virus, and rabies virus. Rabies vaccination is required by law and all kittens/puppies need to be vaccinated first at 3 months and then again at 12 months old and there-after every 3 years. Non core vaccinations can include adeno virus, parainfluenza virus, leptospirosis as well as kennel cough vaccine. These non core vaccinations depend on the potential risk in the area you reside in.

Responsible pet ownership also requires that female pets not be allowed to produce a litter (unless part of a breeding program), as this would only increase the excessive pet population with which the animal welfare and rescue organizations have to deal. Coupled with this, many medical benefits can be derived from the sterilization of the pet at 6 months of age. The risk of uterine, mammary gland and ovarian cancer in females is eliminated. In male pets, early sterilization prevents testicular cancer as well as reduces the risk of prostate cancer and also general aggression.

Some breeders, when selling kittens/puppies, will attempt to include in the price, the cost of all relevant vaccinations. It is therefore advisable for the new owner to insist on a valid vaccination certificate. This vaccination certificate should be issued by a vet as the storage of vaccines by breeders cannot be monitored. The result of an unvaccinated kitten or puppy may be a fatal.

SYMPTOMS THAT REQUIRE

EMERGENCY VETERINARY ATTENTION

A symptom is defined as a physical sign or physical sensation that is evidence a disease or injury may be present.

The decision is sometimes taken by a pet owner to maybe “wait and see” and therefore the actual length of time before the pet receives the necessary medical attention could define its quality of life, alleviate suffering or even result in death.

It is the responsibility of a pet owner, to identify the basic signs and symptoms of trauma or illness and to take the appropriate steps. Contact the vet and describe the symptoms if you think this could be an emergency. However, if your regular vet is closed and you are unable to communicate with the locum vet, do not hesitate to transport your pet to the nearest emergency animal hospital. Please familiarize yourself with their telephone numbers and address so there is no confusion when there is an emergency.

The list of veterinarians and emergency hospitals in your area is found in **S.A. Pet Pages**. A booklet available at all vet clinics and vet shops – free of charge.

Let us promote safe and responsible ownership for our wonderful pets!

SYMPTOMS THAT REQUIRE AN EMERGENCY VET:

OPEN WOUNDS

BURNS

SERIOUS BITE WOUNDS

POISONING

DISCOLOURED GUMS – SHOCK

HIGH OR LOW BODY TEMPERATURE

HEAVY OR LABOURED BREATHING

REPEATED VOMITING AND DIARRHEA

CATATONIC – NON RESPONSIVE

KITTEN / PUPPY STUCK IN THE BIRTH CANAL

UNEXPLAINED OR SUDDEN SWELLING OF THE LIMBS OR ABDOMEN

See “General Symptoms and their Cause”

FRACTURES

HIT BY A MOTOR CAR

ANY EXCESSIVE BLEEDING

BLOATED ABDOMEN

SEIZURE

UNCONSCIOUS

SIGNS OF ACUTE PAIN

REPEATED VOMITING

GENERAL SYMPTOMS AND THEIR CAUSE

BLEEDING FROM ANY ORIFICE

- Vulva of an unspayed female pet - on heat
- Vulva of an unspayed female pet - (if not on heat) uterine infection
- Penis - bladder infection, general trauma to hips and abdomen, penis trauma
- Mouth - injury, broken tooth, tongue laceration or bite wound
- Mouth - coughing blood (bubbles in blood) lung damage **transport to a vet immediately**
- Stool - (black and tarry) - stomach ulcer
- Stool - (bright red) - bleeding from the intestines, acute diarrhea, cancer
- Nose - injury, foreign object, poisoning, ruptured tumour or cyst or abscess
- Nose - blood disorder preventing clotting, poisoning

DIFFICULTY BREATHING

- Pain – quick, shallow breathing
- Abdominal distension and bloat pressure on the lungs - **transport to a vet immediately**
- Trauma - (car accident) fractured ribs – pneumothorax (lung has been punctured by a fractured rib) – **transport to a vet immediately**
- Nose – obstruction due to pus discharge, foreign object, blood clots, tumour
- Pneumonia - **transport to a vet immediately**
- Heart failure with fluid in the lungs

DISCHARGE FROM EYES, EARS AND NOSE

- Eye - clear discharge – dust or pollen in the eye, eye lash inverted
- Eye - thick discharge plus blood – **transport to a vet immediately**
- Ear - dark wax, smelly, - possibly ear mites
- Ear - yellow / green odorous discharge – bacterial infection
- Ear – brown discharge – yeast infection
- Nose - purulent discharge, bacterial, fungal infection, foreign object, tumour,
- Nose - blood - trauma – **transport to a vet immediately**

EXCESSIVE THIRST - Potentially dehydrated

- Diarrhea
- Vomiting
- Bladder infection
- Kidney disease
- Diabetes
- Cushings disease – not enough adrenal gland hormone
- Uterine infection – female cats/dogs
- Biliary fever - **transport to a vet immediately**

LISTLESSNESS, LAMENESS AND COLLAPSING

- Listlessness - tired – excessive exercise
- Listlessness - fever above 39 degrees celsius - **transport to a vet immediately**
- Listlessness - internal bleeding - **transport to a vet immediately**
- Lameness - muscle soreness – over activity
- Lameness - arthritis, joint damage, fractures
- Lameness - cracked or broken nail
- Lameness - thorn in the paw or a cut in the paw
- Collapse - heatstroke - **transport to a vet immediately**
- Collapse - heart failure - **transport to a vet immediately**
- Collapse - cancer end stage - **transport to a vet immediately**
- Collapse - post seizure - **transport to a vet immediately**
- Collapse - bloat (gastric torsion) - **transport to a vet immediately**
- Collapse - post surgery - **contact the vet immediately**

SCRATCHING AND BITING THE SKIN

- Allergies
- Parasites
- Ticks and fleas
- Mites
- Bacterial and fungal infection

VOMITING

- Motion sickness (travel in the car)
- Anxious
- Eaten too much too quickly
- Gastro enteritis - **transport to a vet immediately**
- Intestinal worms
- Rich or fatty food
- Foreign body causing a blockage - **transport to a vet immediately**
- Parvo virus - **transport to a vet immediately**
- Colitis
- Gastric ulcer
- Dehydration
- Poisoning - **transport to a vet immediately**

DIARRHEA

- Change in diet
- Eating rotten food - scavenging (garbage disease)
- Fatty foods
- Lactose food intolerance – milk, protein and carbohydrate in the food
- Gastro enteritis- **transport to a vet immediately**
- Liver disease
- Kidney disease
- Intestinal parasites
- Cancer

CPR - CARDIO PULMONARY RESUSCITATION

Hopefully this is an emergency that never happens to you, but you may be required to administer CPR in order to try and save your pet's life! Seeing your beloved cat/dog experience respiratory failure and cardiac arrest is a very emotional moment, so as an owner you should know the basics - STAY CALM -

FIRST: Check for breathing and a pulse or heart beat

Place your fingers about 5 cms behind the elbow in the middle of the pet's chest to feel for a heart beat.

DO NOT DO CHEST COMPRESSIONS IF A HEART BEAT IS FOUND!

SECOND: If the cat/dog is not breathing - proceed to **artificial respiration**

THIRD: If no pulse or heart beat is found - proceed to **cardio pulmonary resuscitation**

ARTIFICIAL RESPIRATION:

- Turn the cat/dog on to its side and extend his head and neck
- Holding the mouth and lips closed, blow firmly into its nostrils. Strength of breath will depend on the size of the animal.
- ONE BREATH EVERY 3 TO 5 SECONDS – 25 TO 30 PER MINUTE
- Take a breath and repeat till you feel resistance or see that the chest is rising
- Stop for 10 seconds to observe if the cat/dog is able to breathe on its own
- If there is no signs of breathing or stops breathing then continue artificial respiration.

CONTINUALLY CHECK FOR HEART BEAT / PULSE

CARDIO PULMONARY RESUSCITATION:

- Turn the cat on to its back, kneel down at the dog's head
- Clasp your hands over the cat's chest with your palms resting on either side of its chest
- Press your palms down on the chest firmly to approx 5 cms. Moderate pressure as you don't want to cause the ribs to fracture
- Repeat 60 – 90 times per minute
- Artificial respiration should be done at the same time as cardiac compressions
- **Ratio of 2 to 3 heart compressions to one breath**
- After one minute stop and observe, if no reaction continue CPR

**STOP CPR AFTER 20 MINUTES AND ACKNOWLEDGE THAT YOU DID TRY TO SAVE
YOUR PET'S LIFE.**

MOTOR VEHICLE ACCIDENT – CAT/DOG HIT BY A CAR

Try to move the animal out of the way of on coming traffic in order to protect both yourself and the animal from further injuries. Use a carpet from the car, a blanket, piece of cardboard, a space blanket or anything which will give him support (in the event of serious fractures) when you are trying to move him.

Assess the breathing. Is the cat/dog breathing normally or is it labored with his mouth open? A common injury is a punctured or collapsed lung (pneumothorax) causing respiratory problems. Symptoms of respiratory problems include open mouth breathing, large deep chest or stomach movements with elbows sticking out in an attempt to breathe and get air into the lungs. If there is the possibility of a fractured jaw, gently try and move his/her tongue out to one side of the mouth, to assist breathing.

Check heartbeat. A pulse can be detected by placing your fingers in the groin inside the thigh of the back legs.

Mucous Membrane Colour (Gum) . This is to detect if the animal is in shock and the potential of internal bleeding. The mucous membranes (gums) should be a healthy pink colour but if they are pale, blue or white – indication of severe shock - **immediate medical attention is required.**

Bleeding. Use a wad of gauze on any open wound to slow the flow of blood. Is the blood bright or dark red? This will indicate the severity of the wound. Bright red is arterial and will spurt. Dark red is venous blood and will seep or flow quickly but is easy to control. Arterial blood in an open wound indicates a serious injury. If the blood seeps through the dressing, do not remove the dressing just pad extra gauze or cotton wool on top and press firmly. Do not use a tourniquet!

Fractures. Identify a fracture by the position of the limb. For an open fracture put gauze dressing on the wound and around the protruding bone. Be careful not to touch or move the bone as this will cause further pain and stress for the animal. Make a splint using a newspaper or magazine to immobilize the limb and prevent further unnecessary injury and pain.

Transport the animal to the nearest veterinary hospital.

PAIN MANAGEMENT

Preventing and relieving pain is an important goal that will define the period and level of recovery in your pet. An animal's reaction and response to pain may be unpredictable. He may become aggressive and will lift his lip or growl at you, thus exercise caution when dealing with a cat or dog which is experiencing pain.

HOME MANAGEMENT:

Put the animal's bed in a quiet place where children and other pets will not stress or interfere with him. The diet is very important, although he may not feel like eating - nutrition is paramount to a speedy recovery. Tempt him with some special tinned food which could be warmed up slightly in the microwave to increase the smell and which might encourage him to try a few mouthfuls. You may also need to disguise the medication by hiding the tablets in the food.

EFFECTIVE PAIN RELIEF:

DO NOT ATTEMPT TO ADMINISTER HOUSEHOLD PAIN KILLERS e.g. PANADO This form of medication can do irreparable damage to your pet's liver and other organs if used incorrectly.

Complete elimination of pain is not always desirable as the animal may injure himself further. Therefore the pain relief should be sufficient for it to be aware of the pain but be able to carefully move around and maintain normal routines without excessive pain.

Your veterinarian will prescribe the correct pain (analgesic) medication for your pet. Some painkillers have a tranquilizer or sedative effect, anti-inflammatory, or even a local anesthetic in the form of a special cream (for burns).

The veterinarian has taken into account the injury or cause of pain and adjusted his prescription of pain killers and frequency of administration of medication to suit your pet.

Use all the medication prescribed. Do not keep some back for "next time".

Do not accept pills from other pet owners or use medication meant for humans!

EMERGENCY PROCEDURE TO INDUCE VOMITING

As all cats and dogs are very inquisitive, a large range of household items, foods, chemicals, medication and garbage may be ingested causing poisoning and potential long term damage. To minimize complications, the ideal solution would be to make the animal vomit, thus preventing absorption and toxic effects.

Use a solution of water and activated charcoal. (From your First Aid Kit and follow the instructions). Using a 20ml syringe, gently squirt the solution down the **SIDE OF THE THROAT**. This is to prevent the solution accidentally being “breathed” into the lungs as this will cause damage to the lining of the lungs.

In the event you do not have activated charcoal or 3% hydrogen peroxide available, burn a piece of toast and try to get the animal to eat it. The burnt toast will absorb some of the toxins.

After you have given the animal the hydrogen peroxide or activated charcoal solution, encourage light exercise as this will get the fluids to mix in the stomach. Vomiting should occur within 10 minutes. While you are waiting for the animal to vomit, **contact your vet and describe what has happened.**

If your pet is unable to vomit, transport immediately to the veterinary hospital, and advise of your arrival so that they can prepare the medication and drips required.

WHEN TO INDUCE VOMITING:

It is ideal to induce vomiting within two hours of the item or chemical being eaten. Do not induce vomiting if the animal is experiencing a seizure, unconscious, severe shock or serious injury. **Confirm with the vet before proceeding with this action.**

You should induce vomiting if one of the following has been ingested:

- Human medicine
- Overdose of his own medicine
- Chocolate
- Alcohol
- Rat poison
- Anti Freeze
- Toxic plants
- Raisins

DO NOT INDUCE VOMITING IF CORROSIVE POISON HAS BEEN EATEN - THIS COULD RESULT IN FURTHER BURNS TO THE MOUTH AND THROAT.

TRANSPORT IMMEDIATELY TO THE VETERINARY HOSPITAL

BANDAGING

The following directions for bandaging is only a temporary measure as all injuries should receive qualified medical attention from a vet.

The main reason why a wound is bandaged is to protect from further injury and prevent infection. Bandaging, using a splint, holds the fractured limb in place also preventing the animal from further injury and excessive pain and suffering.

BANDAGING A PAW

- Inspect the wound for “foreign objects” e.g. glass, sand, grass, etc.
- Flush with water
- Place a pad of gauze on the wound (never cotton wool) Cotton wool may be used as a pad between the gauze and the bandage if the blood flow is heavy
- Secure the pad by gently rolling a crepe bandage around the paw. Do not bandage too tightly as this will prevent blood flow. You must be able to fit two fingers between the bandage and the animal’s limb
- Roll the bandage using a “figure of eight” direction (see photo)
- Secure the bandage using sticky plaster – apply both on the bandage and also the animal’s fur to hold the bandage in place (see photo)
- Frequently check the dog’s condition – swelling, shock, level of consciousness
- **Transport the animal to the vet for further attention**



BANDAGING AN EAR – floppy ear

- Inspect the wound to assess the damage
- If the wound is a result from a dog fight, flush the area with water as this will also remove any saliva from the other dog which would cause infection.
- Clean the wound gently with damp gauze
- Place a pad of gauze between the ear and the dog's head. (see photo)
- Roll the bandage gently around the head and injured ear. Do not cover the other ear (see photo)
- Make sure that the animal can breathe freely.
- Once bandaging is complete, use sticky plaster on the bandage and also on the dog's fur
- Frequently check the dog's condition – swelling, shock, level of consciousness
- **Transport the animal to the vet for further attention**



BANDAGING AN EAR – up right ear

- Inspect the wound to assess the damage
- If the wound is a result from a dog fight, flush the area with water as this will also remove any saliva from the other dog which would cause infection.
- Clean the wound gently with damp gauze
- Using gauze and cotton wool, make a small ball and place inside the ear
- Gently bend the injured ear towards the dog's head
- Place a pad of gauze between the ear and the dog's head. (see photo)
- Roll the bandage gently around the head and injured ear. Do not cover the other ear (see photo)
- Make sure that the animal can breathe freely.
- Once bandaging is complete, use sticky plaster on the bandage and also on the dog's fur
- Frequently check the dog's condition – swelling, shock, level of consciousness
- **Transport the animal to the vet for further attention**



BANDAGING A SPLINT

- Only apply a splint to the front legs below the elbow, as splinting a rear leg is very difficult and would cause excessive pain and maybe further damage
- Place a cotton wool pad between the fracture and the splint (closed fractures only!)
- For an open fracture, place a large pad of gauze around the protruding bone and bandage around the site. This bandaging is to support the limb – do not use a splint
- Frequently check the dog's condition – swelling, shock, level of consciousness
- **Transport the animal to the vet for further attention**

BITE WOUNDS FROM A FIGHT

As soon as possible the wounds need to be properly cleaned and disinfected. Wash the wound with cold running water to remove any saliva or bacteria. Check for severity and if bleeding profusely place a sterile compress on the wound and **transport to the vet** as soon as possible. Veterinary attention is recommended as there may be internal injuries and puncture wounds which could require suturing or surgery.

If the wounds are not severe, first aid must be initiated as soon as possible to prevent infection.

SYMPTOMS OF INFECTION

- Redness of the wound and area surrounding it
- Swelling of the wound site
- Pus and foul odour
- Pain when touching the wound
- Animal holds his head or leg in a different position favouring the site of the wound.
- Goes off his food
- Becomes depressed

The infection is due to bacteria in an animal's mouth which enters the wound site and multiplies causing a local or systemic bacterial infection.

If left untreated, a bite wound may develop into an abscess (especially in cats). Bacteria from an abscess can spread through the body resulting in septicemia (blood poisoning). The vet may need to drain the abscess surgically. An abscess or bite wound may need to be left open in order to drain naturally, but this decision is for the vet.

BLEEDING

Bleeding occurs when there is a break in the soft tissues of the body and blood is able to escape from the blood vessels.

There are two kinds of wounds:

- OPEN WOUND – a break in the outer layer of skin that results in bleeding and may permit germs to enter the body causing infection
- CLOSED WOUND - there is no break in the outer layer of skin but there is internal bleeding which may be severe. The risk of infection is low except in internal abdominal injuries where the risk of infection is high.

The primary aim in the care of wounds is to stop the bleeding and prevent infection. Most wounds may bleed excessively, therefore working quickly in cleaning, bandaging and getting professional medical care prevents further injury and promotes a quicker healing period.

Arterial blood is bright red and spurts with each heartbeat. This is very serious and maybe hard to control.

Venous blood is dark red and flows more steadily. It may be easier to stop and control than arterial bleeding.

A sterile gauze or pad (even a towel) should be placed over the wound. Do not use cotton wool directly as the cotton fibres may get stuck in the wound. If the blood seeps through the gauze - do not remove the dressing - just add more gauze or cotton wool on top, press down firmly and transport the animal immediately to the veterinary hospital.

BLEEDING FROM THE MUZZLE (NOSE)

Keep the cat/dog calm. Make sure your pet can breathe through his mouth. Take note if the bleeding is from one or both nostrils. **If his gums are pale or light blue - immediately transported to the veterinary hospital.**

POSSIBLE CAUSES FOR MUZZLE (NOSE) BLEEDS:

- Injury from a cat fight or other trauma
- A foreign object –such as grass seeds, insects, etc.
- Poisoning – rat poison or snake bite
- Ruptured tumour, abcess or cyst
- Blood clotting disorder

For all of the above cases keep the pet calm, and transport to the veterinary hospital.

BLEEDING TAIL, PAW OR LIMBS

Injuries to an animal's paw can happen anywhere – at home or in the bush. As paw pads contain many blood vessels, the wound may bleed profusely. If broken glass is the cause of the wound – allow the blood to flow briefly and then flush with water – this may dislodge any glass chips. Cover the wound with a sterile dressing and press firmly to stop the bleeding. If blood soaks the dressing - do not remove, instead add more layers of gauze or cloth. **Do not attempt to make a tourniquet** as this will hurt the animal unnecessarily and will stop the circulation causing further damage. Do not apply ointments.

Seek veterinary care if the bleeding is profuse and continues for longer than 20 minutes.

BLEEDING CHEST OR ABDOMEN

If the animal has an object, such as a stick, protruding from its body, **DO NOT ATTEMPT TO REMOVE IT!** This may cause internal bleeding, open the wound to infection and may increase the shock and pain the animal is already experiencing.

In the event that the object is removed from the chest and there is a sucking noise from the wound, cover with a sterile dressing to prevent further air entering or leaving the body through this injury. The injury is called a pneumothorax and involves damage to the lungs. The lung may actually collapse requiring urgent medical attention.

Transport carefully to the veterinary hospital.

BURNS

Burns can be caused by an electric shock, heat, chemicals, sun, or even worse torture by humans as part of a gang initiation.

TYPES OF BURNS:

- First degree
- Second degree
- Third degree

For first and second degree burns, examine the area under the fur. If the skin is not broken (blisters have not popped) run **cool water** over the area and then apply a cold compress (frozen peas). Never apply ice directly on to the burn as it may increase the pain. If the blisters have popped, do not apply a dressing or cover the area with a bandage. **Veterinary attention is recommended as the animal may be in severe shock.**

If your pet has third degree burns, his skin may be white in colour, or even black and charred. This type of burn can get infected very easily and will take a long time to heal. **Transport immediately to a veterinary hospital.**

SUNBURN – (especially susceptible are white or albino cats) Run cool water over the area and then apply a pack of frozen peas or cold compress for about 15 to 20 minutes. The coolness will help to bring down the swelling and stop the spread of the burn. Ask the veterinarian for further advice regarding the antibiotic cream that could be used. Do not use sunburn protection cream meant for humans without consent of your vet.

Walking dogs on a hot tarmac road can also cause the animal to overheat and their paws may become red and sensitive to the touch. Soak the paws in cool water for about five minutes until the animal's body temperature returns to normal. Check the dog's paws for blisters – gently bandage if necessary to prevent infection.

CHEMICAL BURNS - wash the area with cool water to try to remove most of the chemical from the skin. Make a mixture of four teaspoons of baking soda to two cups of water, spread this evenly over the area. This should help counteract the chemical. Monitor the animal's condition in case he may have swallowed some of the chemical – **treat for poisoning and transport to a veterinary hospital.**

ELECTRIC SHOCK / BURN – switch off the electrical source. Lay the animal on its right side and check for pulse and breathing. Pulse can be felt on inside of thigh – if no pulse - start chest compressions (CPR). Artificial respiration should be started immediately if not breathing. Maintain CPR until the animal starts breathing on its own and has a pulse. Keep warm to minimize shock. There are a number of injuries resulting from an electric shock - **transport immediately to the veterinary hospital.**

DEHYDRATION:

NO ANIMAL SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO BECOME DEHYDRATED BY LACK OF ACCESS TO WATER!

THIS IS A LIFE THREATENING PROBLEM

SYMPTOMS;

- SKIN - pinch the skin on the back between the shoulder blades. The skin should move back into place within two seconds. If the skin stays upright, then dehydration could be the cause and needs to be investigated further by a veterinarian
- EYES – The eyes may be sunken into the head
- CAPILLARY REFILL – The best way to check capillary refill is on the animal's gums. Press your finger on to the gums (causing the blood out of that area), when you lift your finger the blood will flow back into that little area. The blood should return in less than 2 seconds. If the blood takes longer, then this is a sign of dehydration
- GUM MOISTURE – The gums will feel dry and sticky

The animal should be encouraged to drink small amounts of cool water frequently. Too much water will cause vomiting. If he refuses to drink water, using a needle-less syringe squirt small amounts of cool water into the side of the mouth. Giving water too quickly will cause choking.

Transport the animal to the veterinary hospital.

DIARRHEA

As with vomiting, diarrhea is common in cats and dogs. It can range from mild to severe. Not all instances of diarrhea and vomiting require medical attention. Let the animal have access to ample water and remove food for 24 hours before giving a bland meal (rice and boiled meat). **If the diarrhea shows blood – transport to a vet.**

The mixture of both vomiting and diarrhea may in fact signify a serious problem which could be fatal if not attended. Therefore as an owner, the following check list should be made during the next 24 hours as this information is vital for the vet's diagnosis.

- The rate, volume and number of times the cat had diarrhea
- The physical appearance of the stool – texture, smell and colour
- Any signs if mucus present
- Any signs of blood (red and bright or dark and tarry)
- Time and period of the onset of diarrhea
- Vomiting and abdominal strain
- Eating grass
- The mental status of the animal – depressed, sad, alert, happy.
- What may have been ingested

The general causes of diarrhea are;

- Changes in the diet, overeating, scavenging, eating fatty foods, milk
- Bacterial or viral infection – enteritis
- Liver or kidney diseases
- Parasites
- Food allergy and intolerance
- Cancer

The best way to treat basic diarrhea is to feed the animal a bland meal of chicken (skinless) or fish with rice. Ensure that a plentiful supply of fresh water is available to restore rehydration.

Your veterinarian will decide if your animal needs medication and advise the correct diet as your pet may have lost important electrolytes and minerals which are important for normal body functions.

EAR INFECTIONS

Every cat or dog has a natural level of bacteria and yeast growing in their ears. If this natural growth is disturbed, the result can cause serious irritation.

The occurrence of ear infection depends on many factors and include the breed of animal, conformation of the ears (droopy ear), habits (running in long grass), swimming. Initial symptoms are head shaking and ear scratching.

SIGNS OF INFECTION:

- Excessive scratching of ears and head shaking
- Shaking or tilting the head to one side
- A discharge in the ears – variable colour, odour and consistency
- Irritable behaviour
- Ears are painful when touched
- Distinctive smell from the ears – pungent
- Swollen ear
- Bleeding

In the event you suspect your pet has experienced trauma to its head or ears – acting off balance and uncomfortable – **contact your veterinarian immediately** as this could be due to a ruptured ear drum or brain damage with potential long term side effects.

Before assuming your cat or dog has an ear infection, check carefully for ear mites, damage to the ear, fleas, tumors or foreign bodies (grass seeds etc).

In an attempt to prevent infections

- Keep your dog or cat clean
- Maintain a good exercise routine
- A healthy diet
- There are several products to prevent ear infections available from your vet.

It is essential that all cases of ear infections are attended to by a vet.

Leaving the problem unattended can lead to serious ear problems and permanent damage.

FISH HOOK DAMAGE

As South Africa has a very large coast line the majority of dogs staying at the coast will frequent the beach at some point.

Fish hooks can get embedded in the lips, mouth, face, paws or even ingested (eaten).

There are two types of fish hooks - the **single hook** or the **treble hook** (has three hooks linked). **Lures** are very attractive and may look like a toy.

Never try to remove the hook by pulling the fishing line!

SIGNS

- Fish hook protruding from the flesh
- Limping and holding the paw up
- Trying to bite or chew the paw
- Fishing line protruding from the body or mouth
- Loss of appetite
- Painful mouth
- Excessive drooling or salivation

TREATMENT

Removal of a hook will be very painful for your pet and sedation may be necessary. But if you are not close to a veterinary hospital, you may need to remove the hook yourself.

- 1) Embedded in the skin - push the hook through the skin till the barb is shown, then cut the hook with wire cutters and remove. Once the hook is removed, clean the wound to prevent further infection.
- 2) Treble hooks – cut any barbs off which are not embedded and continue as above. But if all three barbs are embedded, then veterinary attention is necessary!
- 3) Embedded in the mouth, esophagus, stomach or intestines require surgery in order to prevent suffering and terrible pain. **If your pet has swallowed a hook, do not try to remove it yourself!**

Transport the animal immediately to the nearest vet or veterinary hospital.

FRACTURES

In all cases, fractured bones require medical attention in order to prevent further complications.

Bone fractures occur in one of four categories:

- Hairline fracture – very mild and difficult to detect without an x-ray. The bone is not actually broken just partially split. A hairline fracture is not immediately dangerous, but may lead to a more painful and complicated situation if left untreated.
- Closed fracture - the bone breaks into distinctive pieces. The skin is not broken and there may be no visible indication of a fracture except swelling over the fracture.
- Compound fracture – the broken bone may be penetrating through the open wound. These are the most painful of the fractures.
- Epiphyseal fracture - separation of the soft section of a growing bone. This occurs mainly in young cats and the most common locations are the growth points of the long bones.

The most obvious way to detect if your pet has a fracture is: the position of the limb (leg may be set at a strange angle) or an open wound displaying a compound fracture, swelling or the animal refuses to put pressure on the limb. (non weight bearing)

A fractured jaw bone will prevent the animal opening or closing its mouth properly.

A fracture of the rib cage may cause painful and labored breathing. This is a very painful fracture and may cause damage to the lungs.

If a fracture is suspected, try to immobilize the limb. Place a newspaper, magazine, piece of wood on either side of the fracture and use a bandage around the “splint” to hold the limb in place. It is advisable to put gauze between the splint and the fracture. **Do not try to set the fracture!**

Spinal fractures are very serious! The animal may be unconscious or immobile. If the spine is fractured and spinal cord damage has occurred, the animal may display a tendency known as posturing. The front legs held out straight. The animal will not whimper as there is no pain. Paralysis may be evident. Carefully move the injured animal on to a board, carpet from the car, cardboard or some other secure sheet.

Transport the animal immediately to the veterinary hospital.

HYPOTHERMIA – COLD

Hypothermia takes place when the cat or dog's body temperature drops dangerously low. A normal body temperature is 38.3 to 38.8 degrees Celsius. Hypothermia occurs when the temperature drops below 36 degrees C.

Prolonged exposure to cold temperatures or an accidental fall into cold water can cause hypothermia. A cat or dog's body will lose heat more quickly in water (or if wet) than if exposed to the air.

There are three levels of hypothermia:

1. MILD

Temperature is between 35.5 to 37.2 C

The animal shivers uncontrollably.

Will begin to act tired or lethargic

2. MODERATE

Temperature 32.2 to 35 degrees C

Will lose coordination and appear clumsy

Loses the ability to shiver!

Pulse and breathing slows and the animal may lose consciousness

The animal's life is in serious danger!

3. SEVERE

Temperature 27.8 to 32.2 C

The animal may collapse and have trouble breathing

The pupils are dilated and the animal will be unresponsive

This animal must be transported to an emergency hospital immediately

How to treat hypothermia.

Get the animal out of the wind or open area. Keep rubbing body to dry the animal and to promote the blood circulation. If the animal is small enough, put inside your coat for your body heat to help improve the situation.

Use a hair dryer (on the lowest setting to prevent burning the skin) or put towels into a tumble dryer. Once the towels are warm (not hot!) put them around the animal. . Hot water bottles can be placed outside the towels or blanket to prevent burns as the skin is very sensitive. When the animal starts to shiver, he is beginning to recover and his brain recognizes that the body is cold and needs to get warm. Monitor the temperature and stop warming when the temperature reaches 38.3 C.

Transport your animal to the veterinary hospital.

HYPERTHERMIA – HEAT STROKE OR HEAT EXHAUSTION

Cats and dogs do not sweat, therefore they must increase their respiratory rate to try to dispel the excess heat via their mouth (panting). When an animal cannot pant fast enough to cool down, the body temperature will rise to a dangerous level causing **heat exhaustion** and **heat stroke** .

Heat exhaustion:

Taking immediate action may prevent damage to internal organs

SYMPTOMS OF HEAT EXHAUSTION

- Excessive and noisy panting
- Skin inside ears reddens
- Diarrhea
- Nausea and vomiting
- Weakness

Get the animal inside a building and out the heat. Put lukewarm water on his fur and allow to cool down. Offer him cool water to drink. Do not put ice directly on the skin as it will cause the blood cells to constrict causing further damage. Ice can be put inside a towel and carefully placed on the limbs and groin area. This will have a cooling effect. Soak a towel in cold water and apply these to the animal's head and back. Make sure that your animal drinks water to **prevent dehydration**. Monitor the temperature as you do not want to cause the reverse effect and cause hypothermia (too cold).

Heat stroke:

Occasionally owners take their pets with them in the motor car. It very dangerous for an animal to be left unattended in the vehicle. Leaving the windows open a little is definitely not acceptable as the heat in the vehicle can reach very dangerous levels within 10 minutes! Heatstroke may develop within 15 minutes!!

This is a very dangerous situation and the animal may die if not attended to quickly!

SYMPTOMS OR HEAT STROKE

- Confusion
- Drooling
- Dry gums
- Lethargy
- Rapid heart rate
- Rectal bleeding
- Refusal to drink
- **Temperature of 39 degrees C or higher**
- Loss of consciousness

IMMEDIATELY HOSE THE ANIMAL DOWN WITH COOL WATER. Fan with a magazine or newspaper. Do not use ice cold water as it will cause the body temperature to plunge too quickly! The animal's temperature must be lowered below **39 degrees Celsius** as serious damage may occur to the major organs (brain, heart, liver and kidneys). Do not allow him to drink excessive amounts of water as this will cause vomiting. Use a syringe to gently squirt **small** amounts of cool water down the side of the animal's mouth to prevent choking. Refusal to drink may be due to the animal's throat being swollen. Getting the animal to drink water must be done to prevent dehydration.

Transport in the car with the air conditioner turned on. Try to keep the animal in a sitting or standing position. Assist if he is unable to sit or stand on his own. The reason is to prevent the blood from pooling causing blood clots due to coagulation.

Get the animal to the veterinary hospital immediately!

POISONING

There are many ways that an animal can be poisoned. It is essential to try to identify the poison as this will help the vet to neutralize the poison and stabilize the animal.

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF POISONING

- **Excessive salivation or foam** around the mouth
- Vomiting – **the contents of the stomach will help to identify the poison**
- Panting or difficulty breathing
- Seizures
- Constricted pupils
- Pain in the abdomen region
- Uncoordinated movements
- Aggression
- Frequent urination
- Weakness and slow movements

CHOCOLATE POISONING

Dark chocolate and cocoa can be toxic for dogs if ingested in large amounts.

SYMPTOMS OF CHOCOLATE POISONING

- Excessive thirst
- Vomiting – **the contents of the stomach will confirm if chocolate was eaten**
- Spasms
- Diarrhea
- Seizures (do not induce vomiting at this stage)

TRANSPORT THIS ANIMAL TO THE VETERINARY HOSPITAL IMMEDIATELY

PUPPIES AND THEIR MOTHER

Pregnancy in dogs lasts approximately 63 - 65 days from the date of conception. When going into labour, the mother will be restless and uncomfortable – pacing, shivering and maybe panting. Different dogs handle this time differently, some whining, vomiting or not eating. She will want to make a “nest” in which to give birth. It is advisable to supply a birthing crate or suitable dog bed. Labour lasts two to eighteen hours. Keep the mother in a quiet and calm place. Don't let other pets or children interfere with her.

A colourless fluid will be passed from her vulva (not urine). Pups will appear approx every half hour. The mother will clean them and bite the umbilical cord. Do not prevent the mother from this action as it is part of the normal birthing process and she will bond with her pups. Placentas are expelled after each puppy. The rough licking of the mother stimulates the puppies to breathe and improves their circulation. Sometimes a new mother will need assistance to tear the sacks open for her. If she still neglects them – clear the fluid from the pups mouth and nose, and then gently but vigorously rub the pup with a towel to stimulate breathing.

If a pup is not breathing, clear the mucous from the mouth and nose with a cotton bud or a suction tube, hold the pup with the head facing down and gently rub the body with a towel to stimulate breathing and for the excess mucous to drain out. Blow gently into the pup's face. Alternate the blowing and rubbing until the pup starts to breathe on his own.

If one of the pups gets stuck in the birth canal, **do not try to push the pup back** as you could damage it and this procedure is painful for the mother. **Transport immediately to the vet.**

THE MOTHER AND HER PUPS – Once the puppies have arrived the mother will eat about three times more than her normal diet. It is suggested to give her puppy food in place of her normal food. **The vet will advise which foods and the quantities to give** her. She will still need to exercise. Also this gives her some time away from the demands of her pups. If she is unable to supply enough milk, your veterinarian will suggest raising the pups by hand and bottle feeding them. **Supplements are available from the vet for this situation**

Sometimes the mother will be depressed or listless and may not give her pups sufficient attention – get advice from your vet. Watch the milk flow from her nipples and also the condition of all the pups (ensure they gain weight daily) in case the pups

are not getting enough milk. The mother, for the first 2 – 3 weeks will lick the pup's stomach and genital area to stimulate urination and defecation.

Milk fever may occur in small breed dogs with large litters. This is due to a lack of calcium in the mother's milk resulting in severe tremors, panting and vomiting. She needs to be transported to the vet as soon as possible for diagnosis and supplementary calcium treatment.

THE PUPPIES –

A healthy puppy is firm, plump and vigorous and will nurse every 2 hours. The pups should sleep quietly after suckling, but if they cry and move around a lot this could be a sign that they are still hungry. At about three weeks the pups will attempt to eat solid food and drink from a bowl. At about 4 weeks the puppies can eat prescribed puppy food three to four times a day, they will still drink from their mother. By seven weeks the pups will be eating dry food and should be weaned off their mother. Never give a puppy bottled milk as it will cause diarrhea. Feed the puppy only food recommended by a vet or vet shop.

Puppies must not be separated from their mother before seven weeks.

It is recommended that all puppies be kept isolated from other pets and public places (parks, beaches etc.) till they have been vaccinated and dewormed.

Vaccinations and deworming should be administered at about 6 weeks – **contact your vet regarding this.**

It is advisable to purchase a puppy whose tail has not been docked It is a procedure that is painful has no immediate or future benefit for the animal and may lead to complications, **it is unnecessary and should not be performed.**

Tail docking, even if performed with local anaesthesia, causes pain and stress to young puppies. Recent research in pain management indicates clearly that puppies, even at a few days of age, have a fully developed nervous system and a well developed sense of pain. Sometimes, tail docking results in serious complications such as bleeding, infection, incontinence, and even hind limb paralysis if not properly performed by a veterinarian. Dogs need their tails for balance and body language.

SEIZURES

A seizure or convulsion is defined as a sudden excessive firing of nerves in the brain. A seizure can last from seconds to minutes and in some case hours. There is a risk of brain damage due to oxygen deprivation during a lengthy seizure.

There are a large number of reasons for a dog to experience a seizure

- Epilepsy (the most common)
- Poisons or toxins
- Head trauma
- Brain tumour
- Allergic Reaction – anaphylactic shock – bee stings, medication
- Diabetic
- Shortage of blood oxygen to the brain
-

A seizure may last from a few seconds to about five minutes

- Falls to the ground
- Lose conscious
- Shaking / trembling
- Excessive drooling / foaming at the mouth
- Teeth gnashing – **do not put anything in the animal's mouth**
- Frantic thrashing of limbs
- Incontinent
- Head drawn backwards
- Paddling of limbs

If your pet is experiencing a seizure or convulsion, protect him from obstacles which could harm him – stairs, hard sharp objects, swimming pool etc. To assist his breathing, use a towel to wipe the excess saliva from the dog's mouth to help clear his airways. Put newspaper under his tail as he may defecate or urinate on your carpet.

Once the dog is in recovery, give him lots of calm affection so that he does not think that he has done something wrong. This will also help him to recover more quickly.

If a seizure lasts longer than 5 minutes or the animal experiences more than two seizures within a 24 hour period, **emergency treatment and medication must be given by the vet as soon as possible.**

SHOCK

Shock is a serious medical condition that can be dangerous if left untreated. It is due to the blood circulation being reduced therefore depriving the vital organs and brain of oxygen. It can progress to collapse and death.

Shock occurs when there is a blood volume loss to the heart, blood vessels and brain. Shock may result as the inability of the body to maintain normal circulation due to many causes including blood loss. Bleeding may be internal or external. Fluid loss by vomiting and diarrhea causing dehydration as well as decreased blood pressure due to infection, poisoning, pain or spinal cord injury are common causes of shock.

SYMPTOMS OF SHOCK

- Pale or white mucous membranes (gums), and eyelids (conjunctiva)
- Dullness and depression
- Sudden cooling of the mouth, skin and legs
- Rapid breathing
- Fixed stare
- Dilated pupils
- Rapid but weak pulse (feel inside leg in the groin area - use two fingers)
- Weakness, convulsions and collapsing

ACTIONS

- If unconscious – keep the dog's head lower than the rest of his body
- Conserve body heat by wrapping him in a blanket
- Gently massage his body to maintain circulation (only uninjured areas)
- Cover any wounds with sterile dressings
- Record your dog's breathing, pulse and colour of gums every 15 minutes
- Call your veterinary surgeon and describe in detail your dog's condition
- Transport to the veterinary hospital
- Try and stay calm as your dog will respond to you and will also relax. Do not panic or get hysterical as this will have a negative reaction and stress your dog.

It is advisable to transport the animal to the veterinary hospital as soon as possible.

SNAKE BITE

Snake bites are common in South Africa. There are three types of snake venom

1. Neurotoxic – affects the central nervous system paralyzing muscles causing inability to swallow and breathing is seriously affected resulting in seizures and coma
2. Cytotoxic – Destroys the tissue causing massive damage to the area bitten and may result in amputation of the affected limb and possibly death due to infection and massive tissue loss
3. Haemotoxic – destroying the coagulant properties of the blood causing massive hemorrhaging internally as well as locally

If bitten by a snake any of the three venoms could be fatal to the animal if not treated quickly.

SNAKE BITE

- STAY CALM AND CALL THE DOG REASSURINGLY
- Put a loose muzzle on the dog if necessary (use triangular bandage)
- Flush the area of the bite with water to clear any excess poison
- Place gauze on the site of the bite
- Using a crepe bandage – bind firmly and quickly up the limb away from the bite this is to slow the blood flow and absorption of poison – **NOT A TOURNIQUET!**
- Try to identify the type of snake (photo if possible)
- If not too heavy – carry the animal to your car
- **Transport immediately to the nearest veterinary hospital – call them and explain the situation and the animal's condition.**

SPITTING SNAKE

- STAY CALM AND CALL THE DOG REASSURINGLY
- Put a loose muzzle on the dog if necessary (use triangular bandage)
- Flush the animal's eyes with water (or milk if possible)
- Try to prevent the animal from rubbing its eyes
- Try to identify the type of snake (photo if possible)
- **Transport immediately to the nearest veterinary hospital – call them and explain the situation and the animal's condition.**

TORN NAIL

Your cat or dog can seriously tear or injure a nail while playing, running or in a fight. This is a very painful injury as there are a multitude of nerves in the nail bed and quick. By cutting or trimming a dog's nails, it is possible to accidentally trim the nail too short and damage the quick causing great pain and bleeding and if not treated may become infected. Some nails are black in colour therefore difficult to judge how short to cut before damaging the quick of the nail.

Nails should be kept relatively short as long nails not only get caught and then torn, but also force the animal to stand or run incorrectly causing back pain and possible further injury.

TREATMENT:

Prevention of infection and further injury is important.

- IF NAIL IS TORN OR BROKEN: Using a good quality sharp trimmer, trim until point of injury but avoid cutting into the quick
- CUT THE NAIL TOO SHORT (CUT THE QUICK) : Stop the bleeding with styptic powder if available. (obtainable from veterinarian) You can even use cake flour or cornstarch. If necessary apply a loose bandage to the paw to keep it covered for a few days.
- IF THE NAIL IS SERIOUSLY TORN: Wash the area with cool water, cover the wound to prevent the torn nail catching on to anything and then **transport to your vet**. The vet may need to sedate the animal to remove the nail or repair the injury.
- PAIN / ANTIBIOTIC MEDICATION: A painful nail injury may require pain and antibiotic medication from the veterinarian

VOMITING

Vomiting is a common occurrence . The seriousness of the vomiting depends upon the underlying cause, the severity and duration of the vomiting. If your pet is bright, alert and active after a bout of vomiting, monitor for 24 hours and give access to clean fresh water.

If the vomiting continues for longer than 24 hours, the following symptoms may indicate the need for urgent veterinary attention.

- Non responsive – severe shock
- Blood in the vomit
- Not eating or showing any interest in food – longer than 24 hrs
- Collapse
- Pale mucous membranes (gums)
- Projectile vomiting (comes out like a jet)
- Diarrhea
- Abdominal bloating

Animals will often vomit because they have over eaten, eaten too quickly or eaten food that is rotten (food poisoning). Some animals have a sensitive stomach and cannot tolerate rich or fatty food or may even be allergic to certain food. Specialised diets are available from the veterinarian to treat these problems. Cats will vomit a fur ball after grooming – this is normal.

Rescued dogs may eat too fast as they may feel as though their survival depends on it. Separate these feeds into two or three lesser amounts and feed as required.

Animals that are about to vomit usually become anxious, eat grass and have heavy drooling (salivation). They walk in circles with their head down, heaving and will then start to vomit.

Possible signs of an **obstruction** may be the eating of grass, vomiting, salivating, stretching and yawning. The animal will be restless and show signs of being uncomfortable. Foreign body obstruction is a very serious problem which can result in a painful death of an affected dog if left untreated. **Transport immediately to a vet** Motion sickness may also cause the animal to vomit.

Dehydration may occur if the vomiting is severe and the animal should be referred to the veterinarian for treatment.