

Pet Health Emergencies: Reference Sheet



Respiratory

Signs

- Coughing
- Panting cats (open mouth breathing, nasal flaring)
- Fast breathing rates (>40 breaths/minute)
- Abdominal push/increased effort
- Blue or white gums

What to do

- Bring to a veterinarian immediately



Neurological

Signs

- Unresponsive
- Tremors
- Generalized convulsions
- Peeing/pooping on self
- Wobbly gait
- Crossing over paws
- Unable to support weight
- Sudden change in behavior/attitude

What to do

- Stay calm
- Bring to a veterinarian immediately
- Remove collar, use a harness instead



Gastrointestinal

Signs

- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Excessive drooling
- Trying to vomit without anything coming up

What to do

- Don't give over the counter medicines
- Don't attempt to feed – withhold food & water for 8-12 hours
- If no vomiting or diarrhea after 12 hours:
 - Offer small amount of water
 - Offer small bland meals often
- Bring to veterinarian if: you're concerned, pet vomits ≥ 2 times within 24 hours, or vomits after eating or drinking

Signs

- Excessive drooling
- Trying to vomit without anything coming up
- Anxious/agitated behavior
- Lying down and not getting up
- Pale gums
- Depression

What to do

- Bring to a veterinarian immediately! These are signs of bloat and other life-threatening emergencies.



Urinary

Signs

- Vocalization (whining)
- Trying to pee but unable
- Trying to pee with only small drops of pee
- Discolored/pigmented pee with straining
- Hiding
- Lethargic/reclusive
- Lack of appetite
- Bloating abdomen

What to do

- Call your veterinarian or bring your pet in for evaluation



Reproductive

Signs

- Abnormal labor if > 3 hours with no signs, > 20 minutes of straining
- Green vaginal discharge before first puppy
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Lethargic/reclusive
- Pale gums

What to do

- Document first passage of fluid and time since last puppy
- Place in quiet box and bring to veterinarian
- Keep warm



Eye

Signs

- Squinting
- Redness
- Swelling

What to do

- Flush the eye with contact solution (NOT WATER)
- Keep pet from scratching the eye
- Don't remove any foreign object
- Don't give over the counter ointments
- Seek veterinary care



Trauma

Examples

- Hit by car
- Dog fight
- Fall from window

What to do

- Apply direct pressure with a clean towel or cloth for at least 3 minutes before checking to see if the bleeding has stopped
- Severe bleeding can quickly be life-threatening—get your animal to a veterinarian immediately if this occurs
- Add towels on top of previous layers if they are soaking through, but don't remove them as it may disturb any clot formation