

# Children's Resources: Veterinary Emergency Medicine



## Veterinary Specialty of the Day:

### Emergency & Critical Care

Some veterinarians undergo further training to specialize in a specific field of medicine. Emergency & Critical Care (ECC) specialists focus on treating animals in the Emergency Room (ER) and Intensive Care Unit (ICU). ECC veterinarians are trained to recognize when an animal has a life-threatening condition and to provide rapid care.

### Discussion Question

- Why might a pet need to go to the emergency room?
- Why are emergency rooms important?

## ECC specialists are trained to...



#### Monitor Vital Signs

This includes blood pressure, heart rate, body temperature, electrical activity in the heart, and gas levels in the blood.



#### Provide Oxygen

For animals in the ICU, sometimes oxygen cages are used, which are temperature controlled enclosures that fill with oxygen to help patients breathe.



#### Prioritize Critical Patients

ECC veterinarians recognize patients facing life-threatening situations and provide care accordingly.



#### Perform Blood Transfusions

In emergency situations, it can be important to provide donated blood to animals.

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## Types of Emergencies

### Respiratory



Signs of a respiratory emergency can include trouble breathing, coughing, or increased respiratory rate.

### Neurological



Neurological emergencies, such as a seizure or a stroke, are related to the nervous system, which includes the brain and spinal cord.

### Gastrointestinal



Gastrointestinal emergencies are related to the stomach and intestines. Signs may include vomiting, diarrhea, or drooling.

### Trauma



Common traumatic injuries in pets include fractures, bite wounds, or falling from a great height.

### Toxin Ingestion



Certain items can be toxic to animals, such as chocolate for dogs or lilies for cats.

### Ocular



Signs of an ocular, or eye, emergency can include squinting, redness, or swelling.

### Urinary & Reproductive



Abnormalities in peeing frequency or in an animal's reproductive organs can be signs of an emergency.

### Inability to Rise



If an animal collapses, it is a sign of an emergency and can have many different causes.

## Activities



### 5<sup>th</sup> Grade & Up

#### Pet Emergency First Aid Kit

*Materials: computer/tablet, paper, pencil/pen*

- The American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) created several lesson plans for teachers interested in introducing their students to veterinary medicine.
- The AVMA's lesson plan "My Pet Emergency First-Aid Kit" has your child practice their researching skills by discovering what items are needed for a pet first-aid kit. This is a great opportunity to involve your child in your pet's health and well-being!
- First, discuss with your child why having a first-aid kit at home is important.
- Next, have your child research what supplies are needed in a pet first-aid kit. Once they have create a list of supplies, you can compare the list with the family first-aid kit or, if you have one already, your pet's first aid kit.
- To read the full lesson plan, follow the URL: [https://www.avma.org/sites/default/files/resources/emergency\\_grade5.pdf](https://www.avma.org/sites/default/files/resources/emergency_grade5.pdf)

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Animal Medical Center  
Usdan Institute for  
Animal Health Education

## Activities



### 9<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup> Grades

#### Career Exploration: Emergency & Critical Care Veterinarians

*Materials: computer/tablet/phone with internet access*

- The field of veterinary medicine is huge and there are many job opportunities available to those interested in pursuing a career in the field.
- If your child is interested in a career in emergency medicine, encourage them to research the various job opportunities and programs that exist.
- Need a place to start? Check out this blog on emergency veterinarians by clicking the link below: <https://www.sgu.edu/blog/veterinary/what-emergency-veterinarians-do/>