

A PRACTICAL GUIDE
FOR DOG AND CAT OWNERS



FIRST AID FOR ANIMALS

This guide was created based on recommendations from veterinary experts and available professional sources. Its aim is to help dog and cat owners manage the most common acute situations until the arrival of a veterinarian. Special thanks go to MVDr. Robert Novotný for valuable cooperation.



FCC CEE is part of communities in cities and municipalities across Central and Southeastern Europe. Every day, our employees take care of clean streets, waste management, and the quality of life of residents. We are part of the everyday lives of millions of people – and often also their pets.

FCC CEE employees working in the field encounter domestic animals every day as part of their work. That is why we know how important it is to be prepared for unexpected situations and to know how to respond correctly.

Many dogs literally adore our garbage trucks. They eagerly wait at windows or in gardens for the arrival of the truck. They welcome our crews during their walks. Cats are not far behind, although they are mainly observers 😊 Pets are full-fledged and beloved members of many families, including the families of our FCC CEE employees.

That is why we also care about their health and safety. That is why this guide was created.

You will find practical advice on how to handle the most common emergency situations until you reach a veterinarian.

Because sometimes the right reaction within a few minutes can decide a life.



Remember:

First aid does not replace veterinary treatment. However, it can significantly increase your animal's chance of recovery.



WHEN MINUTES MATTER

Stay calm and act systematically

Each of us hopes we will never have to save our four-legged companion. Nevertheless, accidents happen – during walks, at home, while traveling, and during play.

In emergency situations, minutes matter, and the right reaction can save a life.

FCC CEE Tip

An injured animal may react unpredictably. Even a normally friendly dog may bite when in pain.



DID YOU KNOW...?

 *Dogs can perceive human emotions very well. If the owner panics, the dog often becomes even more stressed. Staying calm helps not only you, but also the injured animal.*



ABC Rule

A – Airway

Are the airways clear?

B – Breathing

Is the animal breathing?

C – Circulation

Is circulation working and is the animal conscious?

If any answer is **NO,
contact a veterinarian
immediately.**

**Save not only your
veterinarian's phone number,
but also a 24/7 emergency
clinic.**



WHEN TO CALL A VETERINARIAN IMMEDIATELY

Warning signs

- Unconsciousness
- Cardiac arrest
- Severe bleeding
- Traffic accident
- Suspected poisoning
- Seizures
- Overheating
- Severe pain
- Open fractures

Signs of shock

- Pale mucous membranes
- Weakness
- Cold extremities
- Rapid or slowed breathing
- Apathy



DID YOU KNOW...?

 Dogs and cats can often hide pain very well. Some serious injuries may therefore not be immediately visible.



CARDIOPULMONARY RESUSCITATION (CPR)

If a dog or cat is not breathing and has no pulse, resuscitation must be started immediately.

Procedure

1. **Clear the airways**
Remove obstructions, pull the tongue forward.
2. **Rescue breathing**
3. **Chest compression**

CPR in dogs and cats

Oblast	Pes	Kočka
Body position during CPR	On the side (lateral), or on the back for large dogs	Usually on the side
Compression location	Widest part of chest (over the heart) or directly over heart depending on chest type	Over the heart (left side of chest)
Compression technique	One hand (small dogs) / both hands (medium and large dogs)	One or two hands – gentler pressure
Compression depth	approx. 1/3 to 1/2 of chest width	approx. 1/3 of chest width (more carefully)
Compression rate	100–120 / min	
Compression: ventilation ratio	30 : 2 (one rescuer) / 15 : 2 (two rescuers)	
Rescue breathing	Ideally with intubation, otherwise through snout with mouth closed	Very carefully – small air volume
Tidal volume	approx. 10 ml/kg	very low volume, only chest rise
Pulse check	femoral artery (thigh)	femoral artery (gentle palpation)
Anatomical specifics	High chest variability → alters compression site	Small body, risk of overpressure
Most common mistake	Incorrect hand placement	Excessive pressure / over-inflation

CPR IN DOGS AND CATS: KEY DIFFERENCE IN PRACTICE



DOG

Greater emphasis on **correct compression placement** depending on **chest shape** (no universal position).



CAT

Main risk is **excessive force** – CPR must be much **gentler and precise**.

Remember

Perform chest compressions only if the heart is not beating.



DID YOU KNOW...?

 *Successful animal resuscitation is not uncommon. If started early, it can significantly increase survival chances until the veterinarian arrives.*

CPR for Dogs

Perform CPR only when you're in a safe location and have someone who can help you get to a vet.

In dogs with major trauma or serious health issues, CPR is unlikely to be successful.

Before you start...

AIRWAY

Is their airway clear?

Gently pull the tongue forward and check the throat for any obstruction. If you find something, try to reach behind it and remove it.



BREATHING

Are they breathing?

Check whether their chest is rising and feel for airflow from their nostrils. If they are breathing, contact your vet immediately and do not start CPR.



CIRCULATION

Do they have a heartbeat?

Check for a heartbeat by feeling the chest behind the elbow or the inside of the upper thigh. If there is a heartbeat, contact your vet immediately and do not start CPR. If there is no heartbeat, start CPR and arrange transport to the vet.



Guide to performing CPR

1 Position them on their right side

- Or on their back if they're a very flat-chested breed e.g. British Bull Dog/French Bulldog
- On a firm and flat surface



2 Place your hand(s) over their heart

Very small dog
less than 5kg

Medium to large
dog

Deep-chested dog
such as a Greyhound
or Great Dane

Flat chested dog
such as a
Bulldog



3 Give 30 compressions

- In very small dogs, apply compressions with one hand. For all others, keep your arms straight and use your body weight to press the chest down by 1/3 to 1/2.
- Let the chest expand fully between each compression.



4 Give two breaths

- Extend the neck, close mouth, form seal around nose and give a breath
- Watch for rise of chest, allow it to fall again before giving second breath



5 Repeat

- Continue for two minutes, then check for a heartbeat



6



Heartbeat → Go to the vets immediately - call them to let them know you're coming.



No heartbeat → Carry on with CPR and begin traveling to the vet, calling ahead to notify them of your arrival.

MOST COMMON INJURIES

Bleeding



- Apply a pressure bandage or clean cloth.
- Do not remove objects embedded in the wound.

Bites



- Rinse the wound with water.
- Monitor for signs of infection.

Fractures



- Immobilize the limb with a bandage. In case of an open fracture, use a sterile dressing. Remove dirt (e.g. after a car accident) using normal running water (tap or shower). It does not need to be sterile.
- Do not attempt to realign the bone.

Drowning



- Remove from water
- Place on side
- Clear mouth/snout
- Check breathing and pulse
- If absent → cpr

IMPORTANT:

- ✗ Do not pour out water by holding the head down, but position the animal with a slight head tilt downward – evacuation of water from airways.
- ✗ Do not wait – start CPR immediately.

DID YOU KNOW...?

- 🐾 Regularly checking the coat after a walk can significantly reduce the risk of tick-borne diseases.
- 🐾 The most common reason for emergency vet visits in dogs are injuries during play, sports, or sudden escape after wildlife.

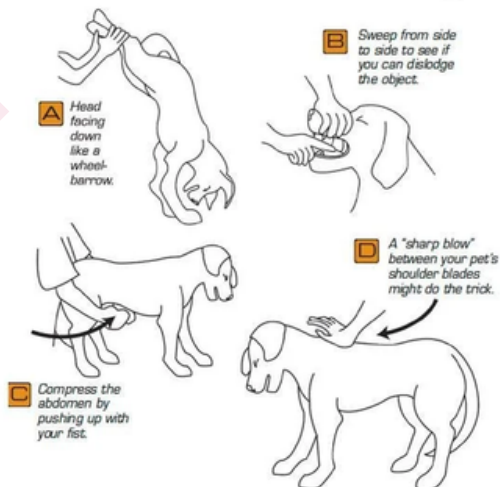


POISONING AND CHOKING

What is most commonly dangerous?

- Chocolate
- Grapes
- Raisins
- Antifreeze
- Medications
- Rodenticides

Heimlich Maneuver for Dogs



When an animal is choking: Symptoms

- Coughing
- Gasping for air
- Blue discoloration of mucous membranes
- Panic

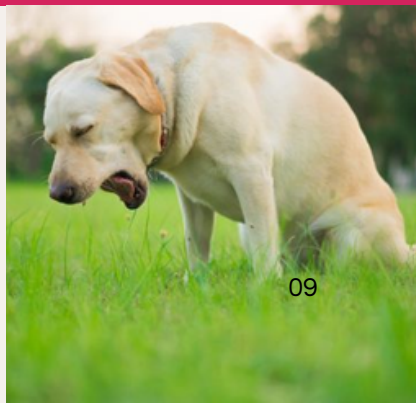
- In **SMALL** dogs (or cats), a **gentle blow** between the shoulder blades may help.
- In **LARGER** dogs, the **Heimlich maneuver** can be used.

WARNING

NEVER insert your fingers DEEP into the animal's mouth if you cannot see the obstruction.

DID YOU KNOW...?

🐾 *Chocolate contains the substance theobromine, which a dog's body breaks down much more slowly than a human's. Therefore, even a small amount can be dangerous for a dog.*





NEVER

Use ice-cold water!
Leave the animal in a car!

OVERHEATING AND DEHYDRATION

Dogs do not sweat like humans.

At high temperatures, overheating of the body can therefore occur very quickly.

Warning signs

- Heavy panting
- Red gums
- Weakness
- Vomiting
- Collapse



How to help

- Move to shade
- Offer water
- Gradually cool the paws and groin with cold, not ice-cold water
- Call a veterinarian



DID YOU KNOW...?

 The temperature inside a parked car can increase by more than 10 °C within 10 minutes, even if it is not extremely hot outside.



TRAVELING WITH PETS



Safe transport

The safety of an animal in the car is essential not only for its comfort but also for the safety of passengers. An unsecured animal becomes a dangerous “projectile” risk during sudden braking or an accident.

Transport crate (travel box)

- The safest option for small and medium-sized dogs and cats
- It must be spacious enough: the animal should be able to stand, turn around, and lie down
- Ideally sturdy, ventilated, with a non-slip base
- **Placement:** most stable in the trunk (station wagons, SUVs) or secured on the back seat with a belt
- **Advantage:** minimizes stress and movement inside the vehicle

DID YOU KNOW...?

🐾 Internal bleeding may not be visible at first glance. Therefore, every animal after a collision with a car should be examined by a veterinarian.



Safety harness (car harness)

- Suitable for dogs that do not tolerate a crate well
- Attached to the seat belt
- Must be a certified harness designed for car transport (not a standard outdoor harness)
- Correct tightening is important – the dog should not move freely in the car
- **Disadvantage:** lower protection in case of strong impact compared to a crate

TRAVELING WITH PETS

What to carry with you

- Water and a bowl (preferably foldable)
- Food + treats for calming and motivation
- Leash and spare collar/harness
- Animal documents (pet passport, vaccinations, especially rabies for international travel)
- Basic animal first aid kit (tweezers, disinfectant, gauze, medications if needed)
- Mat/blanket – familiar scent reduces stress
- Waste bags
- Towel (useful after rain, swimming, or nausea during travel)

Breaks during travel

- Regular stops are essential for both physical and mental well-being.
- **Recommendation: every 2–3 hours** (more often for puppies)
- Always keep the animal on a leash – never release near a road
- Offer water and allow short relief breaks
- In hot weather, plan frequent stops and park in the shade
- Short movement helps prevent stiffness and stress
- **After feeding, allow a longer rest** (min. 30–60 minutes before continuing travel)



FCC CEE Tip

Do not allow animals to search through garbage bins or freely scattered waste during walks. This is where poisoning or ingestion of dangerous objects often occurs.

FIRST AID KIT FOR DOGS AND CATS

Just as we keep a first aid kit at home for people, we should also have a basic kit prepared for our pets.

What should not be missing

- Bandages
- Sterile gauze
- Disinfectant
- Tick tweezers
- Disposable gloves
- Syringe
- Activated charcoal
- Veterinarian contacts
- Regularly used medications



FCC CEE Tip

Keep a first aid kit at home and in your car. It can save valuable time when traveling.

WHEN YOU FIND AN INJURED ANIMAL

When you find an injured animal

During a walk, while driving, or moving around the city, you may encounter an injured animal. It may be a pet, but also a wild animal. In such a situation, it is important to stay calm, think about your own safety, and know whom to call.

Not every animal needs immediate human intervention. However, an injured or frightened animal may be disoriented, aggressive, or in shock. Therefore, always approach it carefully.

ON THE ROAD

Collisions with animals or finding an injured animal near a road are among the most common situations people may encounter.

How to proceed

1. Stop in a safe place and mark the accident location.
2. Protect yourself and other road users.
3. Approach the animal slowly and calmly.
4. If possible, prevent it from returning to the roadway.
5. If necessary, cover the animal with a blanket or jacket to calm it.
6. Contact appropriate assistance.

WARNING

Even a friendly dog may bite when in pain. Never try to lift or move the animal by force if you suspect spinal or limb injuries.

WHEN YOU FIND AN INJURED ANIMAL

IN THE CITY

In cities and municipalities, you will most often encounter stray or injured dogs and cats.

If the animal has a collar with identification, try to contact the owner. In many cases, however, it is more appropriate to call professional help, especially if the animal is injured or in a dangerous environment.

How you can help

1. Secure a safe place away from traffic,
2. Offer water if the animal is conscious,
3. Prevent further injury,
4. Contact municipal police or a veterinarian.

IN THE WILD

Young deer, hares, or birds are often found by people trying to help them. In reality, they often do not need help.

Before intervening, observe the situation from a safe distance. The parents may be nearby and return later.

Help is appropriate especially if:

- The animal is bleeding,
- It has visible injuries,
- It cannot move,
- It has been hit by a vehicle,
- It is entangled in waste, wires, or nets.

**In such cases,
CONTACT
A WILDLIFE RESCUE
station.**

WHEN YOU FIND AN INJURED ANIMAL

How to safely handle an injured animal

If it is necessary to move the animal:

- Use a blanket, towel, or jacket
- Handle it as gently as possible
- Try to limit movement of injured body parts
- Keep the animal warm
- Minimize noise and stress

Never administer human medication without a veterinarian's recommendation.



WHO TO CONTACT

Veterinarian	If it is a pet or an acute health problem
Municipal police	If it concerns a stray animal, an animal in danger, or a situation in a public space
Wildlife rescue station	If it concerns injured birds, hedgehogs, hares, deer, or other wild animals
Emergency line 112	In case of a traffic accident or a situation threatening human safety



DID YOU KNOW...?

***🐾** Many rescue stations recommend consulting by phone before capturing an injured animal. Experts often advise whether intervention is truly necessary and how to proceed without causing further harm to the animal or the person.*

TEN RULES OF FIRST AID FOR ANIMALS

- **1** Stay calm.
- **2** Ensure safety.
- **3** Check breathing.
- **4** Check pulse.
- **5** Stop bleeding.
- **6** Do not underestimate shock.
- **7** If unconscious, start CPR.
- **8** Protect the animal from overheating.
- **9** Always call a veterinarian. Before visiting an emergency clinic, confirm by phone that they have capacity, as emergency facilities are often overloaded.
- **10** After providing first aid, ensure professional treatment.

FIRST AID FOR ANIMALS

Important phone numbers



My veterinarian	
Emergency veterinary clinic	
Toxicology center	
Municipal police	
Rescue station	



DID YOU KNOW...?

 *The best first aid is **prevention.***

A large number of injuries can be prevented with proper supervision, safe transport, and regular health care.



EMERGENCY CARD

FOR DOGS AND CATS



1

BASIC PROCEDURE IN ANY CRISIS

Check:

- Is the animal conscious?
- Is it breathing?
- Does it have a pulse (thigh)?

IF NO:

- ➡ IMMEDIATELY CPR

2

CPR (HEART + BREATHING)

Ratio:

- 1 rescuer: 30 compressions : 2 breaths
- 2 rescuers: 15 compressions : 2 breaths

Compressions:

- 100–120/min
- 1/3 of the chest
- dog: depending on size (one/two hands)
- cat: gently, one hand

Breaths:

- through the snout/mouth
- only until the chest rises

3

DROWNING

Procedure:

- remove from water
- place on the side
- clear mouth/snout
- check breathing and pulse
- if absent → CPR

IMPORTANT:

- ✗ do not pour water out by holding the animal upside down
- ✗ do not wait – start CPR immediately

4

RESPIRATORY ARREST (PULSE PRESENT)

- ➡ rescue breathing only

- 10–12 breaths / min
- small air volume
- monitor chest movement

5

CHOKING / FOREIGN OBJECT

If the animal coughs:

- let it cough (do not intervene forcefully)

If not breathing:

- open the mouth
- check visible obstructions
- carefully remove

Do not blindly insert fingers deep into the throat

6

UNCONSCIOUSNESS (BREATHING + PULSE OK)

- clear airways
- monitor breathing
- place on side
- go to a veterinarian immediately

7

OVERHEATING (HEATSTROKE)

Symptoms:

- heavy breathing, drooling
- weakness, collapse

Procedure:

- move to shade
- cool: water + wet towel (neck, groin, paws)
- offer water (not forcibly)
- go quickly to a veterinarian

- ✗ do not cool the whole body with ice

8

WHAT TO HAVE WITH YOU

- water + bowl
- leash
- blanket
- towel
- bags
- basic first aid kit
- veterinarian contact

9

WHEN TO GO TO THE VETERINARIAN IMMEDIATELY

- breathing does not resume within a few minutes
- CPR was necessary
- after drowning
- repeated collapse
- severe breathing difficulty / blue mucous membranes

10

MAIN RULE

**Better incorrect CPR
than no CPR.
Minutes matter.**





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Environment
Service for the Future