Dog First Aid Checklist

A dog-specific checklist to help owners respond to choking, bleeding, heatstroke, and paw injuries and know when to call the vet.

Be Prepared

- [ ] Save your vet and nearest emergency hospital numbers
- [ ] Keep a pet poison helpline number handy
- [ ] Stock and check a dog first aid kit
- [ ] Learn your dog's normal breathing and gum color
- [ ] Keep a leash, towel, and carrier accessible
  Program emergency numbers into your phone in advance

Choking

- [ ] Look for pawing at the mouth, gagging, or panic
- [ ] Open the mouth and remove a visible object if safe
- [ ] Avoid pushing an object deeper down the throat
- [ ] Keep your dog as calm as you can
- [ ] Get to emergency care if breathing is blocked
  Take care, as a panicked dog may bite

Bleeding & Wounds

- [ ] Apply firm, steady pressure with a clean cloth
- [ ] Hold pressure rather than lifting to look
- [ ] Cover the wound loosely once bleeding slows
- [ ] Keep your dog calm and limit movement
- [ ] Go to a vet for deep or heavy bleeding
  Heavy or spurting bleeding is an emergency, so go at once

Heatstroke

- [ ] Watch for heavy panting, drooling, or weakness
- [ ] Move your dog to shade or air conditioning
- [ ] Wet the coat with cool, not ice-cold, water
- [ ] Offer small sips of water if your dog is alert
- [ ] Get to a vet immediately, even if cooling helps

Paw & Leg Injuries

- [ ] Check pads for cuts, splinters, or burns
- [ ] Rinse a minor cut and apply gentle pressure if bleeding
- [ ] Avoid moving a leg that may be broken
- [ ] Limit walking and keep your dog still
- [ ] See a vet for limping, swelling, or deep wounds

Transport to the Vet

- [ ] Support the body and avoid twisting an injured area
- [ ] Use a board or blanket as a stretcher for a large dog
- [ ] Keep your dog warm and calm during the trip
- [ ] Call ahead so the clinic can prepare
- [ ] Bring any packaging, medicines, or samples

Important

- [ ] This checklist is general information for owners, not veterinary advice; first aid does not replace professional care, so always consult a licensed veterinarian

  In any emergency, contact your vet or an emergency animal hospital immediately