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PREVENTION AND SAFETY OVERVIEW

From the candy dish on the coffee table to the foxgloves in the flowerpot, the average home contains numerous safety hazards for dogs and puppies. But protecting your pooch isn't as difficult as you might think—it just takes a little effort up front. Luckily for your dog, you're up to the task, or you wouldn't be holding this book! This chapter will teach you how to lay the groundwork for overall safety: learning the basics of prevention and preparedness, and setting yourself up for a successful outcome if you are ever faced with an emergency.



Preparing Your Emergency Information

Imagine you've just come home to find your trash knocked over, vomit on the kitchen floor, and your dog listless and unable to stand. Who will you call for help? Depending on the time, day, and type of emergency, the answer might not always be the same. Many regular veterinary clinics don't keep emergency hours, and designated emergency clinics are often open only on nights and weekends. Assembling the right information now—before an emergency—is a critical step in getting your dog fast treatment.

STEP 1: WRITE THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION ON INDEX CARDS:

Your Regular Veterinarian

Name
Phone number
Address/Directions
Hours of Operation
Drive time in moderate traffic

Emergency Clinic

Name
Phone number
Address/Directions
Hours of Operation
Drive time in moderate traffic

Microchip or Tattoo Information

Registering company
Phone number
Your dog's ID number

24-Hour Animal Poison Control Center Hotline
For poison-related emergencies, call the ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center hotline. Veterinary toxicologists are available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, and can quickly assess the seriousness of the situation based on your dog's weight, age, and type

and amount of poison ingested. They'll guide you through the steps to take immediately, such as how to induce vomiting, and even call your vet's office or emergency clinic to advise the staff prior to your arrival. After they've helped you, they will ask for a credit card number for a reasonable consultation fee.
In North America: ASPCA's 24-hour Animal Poison Control Center 888.426.4435 (Long distance charges may apply if calling outside of North America)

In the United Kingdom: Vetfone 24-Hour Helpline: 09065 00 55 00
This helpline is staffed 24/7 by qualified veterinary nurses with access to a pet poison database. A nominal per-minute charge applies. Inquire about the fee when you call.

Outside North America/United Kingdom: Ask your veterinarian for the best number to call in a poison emergency.

STEP 2: POST THE ABOVE INFORMATION.

Post an index card near your main home telephone. Keep an additional copy in your wallet or purse. Enter all information into your cell phone and/or PDA. (Consider transcribing the information on the inside cover of this book.)

STEP 3: BOOKMARK THE EMERGENCY FIRST AID SECTION OF THIS BOOK.

Place a bookmark or otherwise mark the beginning of the Emergency First Aid chapter (page 118) for quick reference.

STEP 4: KEEP THIS BOOK WITH YOUR DOG'S SUPPLIES—NOT HIDDEN ON THE BOOKSHELF!

If this book is tucked away on a bookshelf, it might not be easily accessed in an emergency. Pick a spot, such as with the dog's first-aid kit (see page 12), and keep it there.

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THE GARAGE, BACKYARD, AND BEYOND: KEEPING SAFE IN THE GREAT OUTDOORS

Dogs love venturing outdoors, and for good reason—there's no better place to stretch those legs, smell the roses (and other less-than-rosy smelling things), and enjoy a satisfying romp with their favorite people and playmates. A dog's curiosity is heightened by the ever-changing sights and smells outside—even in their own backyard, where harmful garden products, chemicals, toxic plants, and other hazards are sometimes found. This chapter will show you how to create a safe backyard haven for your dog or puppy, deal with seasonal safety issues, and avoid some common accidents that happen during canine travel and adventure.



Backyard Safety: Plants, Poisons, Pools, and More

All backyards are different; each has its own unique requirements for becoming a dog-safe retreat. Even a very small space with no greenery must be properly fenced, have no raised decks or balconies a dog or puppy could fall from, and offer adequate protection from the elements. Other outdoor spaces are so vast they're nearly impossible to securely fence and police for hazards. In these cases, consider fencing off a more manageable portion. Once you've defined the space your dog will have access to, you'll need to make it comfortable and free from dangerous plants, pests, and chemicals, as well as physical and weather-related hazards.

FENCING

The primary goal of fencing is to safely contain the dog on your property to prevent her from escaping, becoming lost, being hit by a car, or getting otherwise injured. Wood, iron, chain link, vinyl—it doesn't matter what the fence is made of, as long as it prevents the dog from squeezing through, digging under, jumping over, or being injured by gaps or sharp edges.

Holes and Gaps. Repairing holes and gaps in your fence prevents your dog from leaving and keeps other dogs and critters from entering your yard. It also minimizes the likelihood of strangers teasing or poking sticks through to torment the dog. A dog can get her head or body caught in gaps or slats that are too wide. Attaching chicken wire along the bottom half of an otherwise-sturdy fence can often solve this problem.

Fractures and Limb Injuries

Fractures and other limb injuries are not life threatening in and of themselves—however, the pain, trauma, and blood loss that often result can quickly cause a dog to go into shock or respiratory distress, which is an emergency. Since many fractures are caused by falls or car accidents, there could also be internal injuries present. For these reasons, any fracture should be treated as a serious injury requiring fast veterinary treatment.

If a dog has fractured his back or pelvis, follow the instructions for transporting a critically injured dog on page 129.

- **Check for signs of shock or respiratory distress.** Watch the dog closely as you proceed to treat the fracture (see Rescue Breathing and CPR, page 122, and Shock, page 147) and take immediate action if necessary. If there are no signs of these, move on to the next step.
- **Keep the dog quiet and calm, and muzzle/restrain him if possible.** Fractures are extremely painful, which can cause even the gentlest dog to bite.
- **If the bone is protruding outside the skin, don't move it.** Leave the bone in the position you found it.
- **Wash the area of exposed bone with saline** (such as contact lens solution, or 1 teaspoon (6 g) salt added to a quart [946 ml] of warm water) and cover with a sterile, nonstick pad, dressing, or clean cloth. Secure the dressing with tape a few inches (7.5 cm) beyond the exposed bone, taking care not to disturb the bone or wrap the dressing too tightly. Exposed bone is highly prone to infection, so be sure to keep the dressing clean.

- **Determine whether or not to splint.** If you are less than thirty minutes from the vet, forgo making a splint unless you're unable to keep the dog still and you think he'll further injure himself. A pet carrier or kennel can help immobilize the dog as you drive. If you're unable keep the dog still and feel a splint is necessary, go to the next step.
- **Splint the limb in the position you found it.** Begin by wrapping the injured limb comfortably in a soft towel or cloth. Next, find something rigid (a rolled-up magazine, newspaper, or sticks for a large dog; pens, pencils, or tongue depressors for a small dog) and place it around or on either side of the limb to provide stability. Secure the splint at multiple sites above and below the fracture with tape, cloth strips, plastic wrap, or panty hose. Be careful not to disturb the position of the injured limb. Do not wrap the splint too tightly—you should be able to slip a finger between the limb and the material you've tied it with.
- **Get immediate veterinary treatment.**

Making a splint can be challenging, and doing it wrong can cause more harm than good. Do not splint the limb if you don't have the tools to do it correctly.



signs of a fracture

- Pain
- Swelling
- Bone protruding from skin
- Lameness
- Abnormal limb position

Splinting Injured Limbs



Make sure the splinting material reaches all the way up the leg. A rolled-up newspaper or magazine works well, since it can be easily wrapped around the limb and tied with cloth strips, torn sheeting, or panty hose.



If you have no rigid surface to make a splint, you can use the dog's opposite uninjured leg. Place a soft cloth in between the two limbs and tie the two legs together. Don't tie them too tight—you should be able to slip your finger in between the wrapping and the limb.