

At Greenwood Lake Animal Hospital, we take your pet medical care very seriously. We partner with you by taking a “*Wholistic*” approach. We offer unsurpassed preventative care for your pet’s age, breed and lifestyle. With annual wellcare visits, we can monitor any changes in your pet. If your pet falls ill or is injured, we ensure your pet receives the best possible care. We are here to answer your questions and address your concerns. Just call.

### **13 Animal Emergencies that Require Immediate Veterinary Consultation and/or Care**

1. Severe bleeding or bleeding that doesn't stop within five minutes
2. Choking, difficulty breathing or nonstop coughing and gagging
3. Bleeding from nose, mouth, rectum, coughing up blood, or blood in urine
4. Inability to urinate or pass feces (stool), or obvious pain associated with urinating or passing stool
5. Injuries to your pet's eye(s)
6. You suspect or know your pet has eaten something poisonous (such as antifreeze, xylitol, chocolate, rodent poison, etc.)
7. Seizures and/or staggering
8. Fractured bones, severe lameness or inability to move leg(s)
9. Obvious signs of pain or extreme anxiety
10. Heat stress or heatstroke
11. Severe vomiting or diarrhea – more than two episodes in a 24-hour period, or either of these combined with obvious illness or any of the other problems listed here
12. Refusal to drink for 24 hours or more
13. Unconsciousness

The bottom line is that **ANY concern about your pet's health warrants, at minimum, a call to your veterinarian.**

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## **In Case of Emergency**

### **Signs That Your Pet Needs Immediate Care**

Your pet may require emergency care due to trauma from an accident or fall, for example, or other life-threatening situations such as illness, choking, heatstroke, an insect sting, or poisoning. These are some signs that you should seek veterinary care immediately:

- Change in body temperature (falling through the ice)
  - Difficulty standing/walking
  - Disorientation
  - Excessive bleeding
  - Loss of consciousness
  - Pale gums
  - Paralysis (apparent/sudden)
  - Rapid breathing
  - Seizures
  - Weak or rapid pulse
- ....And, if you sense something is just not right with your pet

### **Preparing for an Emergency**

Being prepared is the best way to deal with a pet emergency. Being proactive regarding your pet veterinary care will often prevent medical issues from escalating.

- Keep our phone number (973) 728-2233 and the nearest 24-hour emergency veterinary hospital programmed into your phone.

Have on hand, in one convenient place, your pet's medication information (drug names and doses), collar and tags, medical records and vaccination history, microchip number, tattoo or other identifying marks, and a recent photo (in case your pet gets lost).

- Learn basic animal first aid.
- If you leave your pet at a boarding kennel or with a caregiver, always leave a phone number where you can be reached in case of an emergency and call us to give your authorization to provide care.
- Leave written authorization and advanced medical directives with your veterinarian and any other surrogate decision-makers regarding your pet's care if you are not available.
- Assemble a pet first aid kit.

### **First Aid Kits**

You can purchase preassembled first aid kits through pet supply stores, hunting/sporting goods stores, and online resources. Keeping a first aid kit at home and in the car is always a good idea since accidents can happen on the road. Look for kits with these supplies—or put together your own:

#### **First Aid Kit Checklist**

1" or 2" adhesive tape	Latex gloves
2" or 4" roll gauze and gauze pads	Muzzle
3% hydrogen peroxide	Nylon leash
Bandage scissors	Petroleum or KY jelly
Blanket	Plastic wrap
Bulb syringe	Rectal thermometer
E-collar	Tick removal tool or tweezers
Eye wash (sterile saline solution)	Towel
Ice pack/Heat Pack	

### **Poison Control**

If you suspect your pet has ingested something poisonous, call one of these poison control hotlines immediately. They provide 24/7 access to experts in pet poisonings. Each charges a fee (indicated below), payable by credit card:

- The ASPCA's national Animal Poison Control Center at 888-426-4435 (Pets registered with HomeAgain Microchips are covered)
- The Pet Poison Health Line at 855-764-7661

### **Vital Signs**

If you notice any symptoms of illness or injury, learn how to check your pet's vital signs to evaluate their essential body functions:

#### **Dogs:**

- Rectal temperature should be between 99.5 and 102.5 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Heart rate should be 80–140 beats/min (30 lbs.).
- Respiratory (breathing) rate should be less than 40 breaths per minute.
- Gum color should be pink.

#### **Cats:**

- Rectal temperature should be between 100 and 102.5 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Heart rate should be between 160 and 210 beats per minute.
- Respiratory rate should be less than 40 breaths per minute.
- Gum color should be pink.

## **Primary Care/Preventative Health Screens**

Just as we humans have primary care physicians and go for annual physicals it's important for pets to receive ongoing preventive care. Not only will this keep your pet in tip top shape, early detection and diagnosis of illness will likely reduce the chance of "emergencies." Many non-accidental emergencies are actually undiagnosed and thus untreated conditions that can easily be avoided with regular check-ups.

## **Handling an Emergency**

First and foremost, remain calm. Your pet can sense your stress.

## **Approaching an Injured Pet**

Injured animals are invariably scared, so approaching them requires caution and common sense. Protect yourself from being bitten or scratched:

- Move slowly, and talk quietly and calmly, as you approach your pet.
- Wear protective gloves, if necessary.
- Keep your face away from your pet's face.
- If necessary, and if your pet isn't vomiting, place a muzzle to reduce the chance you'll be bitten. Dogs can be muzzled with towels, stockings, or gauze rolls. Cats and other small animals may be wrapped in a towel to restrain them; make sure the nose is uncovered so it can breathe.

\* Please Note: We have Rabies in our area. What might look like signs of an injured animal might actually be the onset of Rabies. Before approaching an unknown injured animal, please call Animal Control for assistance.

## **Assessing and Controlling the Situation**

Evaluate your pet's ABCs: Airway, Breathing, and Circulation, along with its vital signs (see Vital Signs to know what's normal) so you can share this information with the veterinary team. Control any bleeding by applying direct pressure on the wound with sterile gauze and/or a towel. Then contact us or an emergency animal hospital for guidance.

## **Contacting a Veterinarian**

If it's during regular business hours, contact us at 973-728-2233 to determine if you should bring your pet directly to the office, or if the situation warrants a visit to an animal emergency hospital. If it is after regular office hours, call your animal emergency hospital to alert them that you're bringing your pet in so they can be ready for you when you arrive. Please be sure to leave us a voice message if you go to an emergency hospital so we can follow up on care.

## **Transporting Safely To Appropriate Care**

For small animals, especially cats, keep them confined in some sort of container during transport to reduce the risk of further injury. Pet carriers work well, or you can use a box, ensuring your pet has enough air. (Poke breathing holes in sides of cardboard) For larger dogs, confining movement is equally important. You can use a board, toboggan/ sled, door, throw rug, blanket or something similar to serve as a stretcher, and use cloth tape as a restraint. Contact us to let us know when you are arriving so we may assist you when you arrive from your vehicle.

## **Common Pet Emergency Injuries and Conditions**

### **Abdominal Pain/Bloating**

**Signs:** Rigid (hard) abdomen, hunched posture, retching without vomiting, anxious behavior, excessive licking, drooling, collapse

**What to do:** Abdominal bloating is often a life-threatening emergency, so seek evaluation by your veterinarian immediately. Do not give your pet food or water.

### **Allergic Reactions**

**Signs:** Itching, facial swelling, hives, sneezing

**What to do:** These symptoms have various causes. It's important to have your pet examined by a veterinarian because some allergic reactions can progress to severe swelling, vomiting, and troubled breathing. Do not give your pet any medications at home without speaking to your veterinarian.

### **Bites (From Other Animals)**

**Signs:** Puncture wounds, torn skin, bleeding

**What to do:** Lightly wrap the wound in gauze or a clean towel to protect it and use direct pressure to control bleeding. Because there may also be internal damage, and there is risk of infection, veterinary evaluation is highly recommended.

### **Bloat (Gastric Dilatation Volvulus or GDV)**

**Signs:** This condition mainly affects dogs. Signs are restlessness and pacing, drooling, swollen stomach, retching without producing any vomit, weakness, pale gums, rapid heartbeat, shortness of breath, collapse. Any dog can have bloat, but it's more common in deep-chested, large breeds like Akitas, boxers, basset hounds, and German shepherds. Some are at a higher risk than others, including Great Danes, Gordon setters, Irish setters, Weimaraners, and Saint Bernards.

**What to do:** Bloat is a life-threatening condition. Get your dog to the veterinarian immediately.

### **Breathing (Respiratory) Difficulty**

**Signs:** Rapid or labored breathing, open-mouth breathing, pale or blue gums, restlessness

**What to do:** Bring your pet to the veterinarian immediately. Limit your pet's activity and keep him/her as calm as possible.

### **Burns**

**Signs:** In first-degree burns, the skin is intact but your pet will show signs of pain.

Second- and third-degree burns are more serious, with the skin partly or completely burned through. In these cases, your pet may also show signs of shock (see Shock).

**What to do:** For chemical or heat burns, flush the area with cool water for 5 minutes. Then apply a cool compress to the area for 10 to 15 minutes (never apply an ice pack directly to the skin; instead, wrap the pack in a towel or other cloth). Call or visit your veterinarian for an evaluation. Severe burns can be life-threatening.

### **Car Accidents**

**Signs:** Your pet may have obvious signs of injury (such as a broken or crushed limb, or inability to walk), or there may be internal injuries that aren't evident.

**What to do:** An examination by your veterinarian is always recommended. Be careful when handling your pet for transport. If you suspect bone fractures or spinal injury (your pet can't use its hind legs), use a rigid support such as a piece of wood, a door, or an ironing board as a stretcher. Use cloth tape to secure your pet to the makeshift stretcher across the hips and shoulders.

## **Cardiac Issues**

Cardiac emergencies in pets can occur for a variety of reasons, including congestive heart failure (CHF, when the heart can't pump effectively, causing blood to back up into the lungs and fluid to accumulate in the body), arrhythmias (heart rhythm disorders), cardiac tamponade (compression of the heart due to an accumulation of fluid in the sac around the heart), and thromboembolic disease (when a blood clot blocks the flow of blood to the heart).

**Signs:** Symptoms of a heart problem can include constant panting, coughing (especially at night), exercise intolerance, increased respiratory (breathing) rate, heavy breathing and gasping, dilated pupils, bluish discoloration of the skin and mucous membranes, loss of consciousness, lack of response to stimulation.

**What to do:** These are life-threatening conditions that must be diagnosed quickly to avoid delays in treatment. Contact your veterinarian immediately.

## **Choking**

**Signs:** It's important to understand that choking is extremely rare in animals. If it does occur, symptoms may include noisy breathing, gagging, difficulty breathing, severe respiratory distress, or inability to breathe at all.

**What to do:** Use extreme caution to prevent getting bitten. If you can do so safely, examine your pet's mouth; if a foreign object is visible in the mouth or back of the throat, use something like kitchen tongs to dislodge it (saliva may make it too slippery to use your fingers, which also puts you at risk of being bitten).

The Heimlich maneuver can be performed on your pet only if you can see the foreign object in the back of your pet's throat and you can't dislodge it any other way (performing the Heimlich maneuver on a pet that's not choking can cause internal injuries).

To perform the maneuver:

- Grasp your pet around its waist and place your hands or fists just behind/under the ribs
- Compress your hands upward and inward in a few short, quick bursts
- Check your pet's mouth to see if the object has been dislodged (Throats can quickly swell from injury).

Even if you're able to dislodge the object, you should have your veterinarian examine your pet to ensure there's no injury to its airway or lungs.

## **Cuts**

**Signs:** Punctured skin, bleeding

**What to do:** Lightly wrap the wound in gauze or a clean cloth and use direct pressure to control bleeding. Do not remove the wrap as it may dislodge blood clots. If blood is seeping through the wrap, apply additional layers of gauze or cloth. If bleeding doesn't stop within a few minutes or is excessive, call your veterinarian. Do not attempt to remove any penetrating object in the wound. A tourniquet is rarely needed and may result in permanent damage to an extremity because it restricts blood flow.

## **Diarrhea**

**Signs:** Frequent loose, watery stools

**What to do:** Seek veterinary care if you notice foreign material or blood in the stool. Otherwise, if diarrhea is mild (1 to 2 times), try withholding food for 4 to 6 hours, then

gradually reintroduce a bland diet. A bland diet consists of three parts cooked white rice with one part lean protein (such as boiled chicken breast or low-fat cottage cheese) with no spices or sauces. Feed your pet small amounts of this mixture throughout the day, and gradually reintroduce regular food if the diarrhea subsides. If diarrhea persists for more than two days, seek veterinary care, as your pet may become dehydrated and it may indicate a more serious illness. Bring in a recent fecal sample to be tested for internal parasites.

### **Ear Problems**

**Signs:** Scratching the ears, shaking head, whining, head tilting, swollen/puffy ear flap, strange odor or discharge from ear(s)

**What to do:** For your safety, muzzle your pet or have someone hold its mouth closed while you examine its ears. If you see an obvious foreign body, pull it out if possible. Allergies, infections, or other irritants can manifest as ear discomfort. If signs of ear problems persist, call a veterinarian and have your pet seen as soon as possible. If the ear needs flushing, it's advisable to have your veterinarian do this.

### **Eye Problems**

**Signs:** Red, swollen, or watery eyes, discharge from the eyes, squinting or pawing at the eyes, visible foreign object in the eye, and/or walking into objects.

**What to do:** Some eye problems can be serious and immediate treatment is needed to save your pet's vision, so a professional exam by your veterinarian or referral to a veterinary ophthalmologist is recommended for any eye concerns. To prevent your pet from pawing his/her eye, you can use an e-collar (a pet cone) during transport. If you see a foreign object in your pet's eye, do not attempt to remove it yourself; seek veterinary care right away.

### **Fleas**

**Signs:** Repeated scratching, fleas found on pet, flea dirt (dark, flaky material in your pet's fur), weakness, pale gums

**What to do:** Fleas usually cause mild itching and aren't a medical emergency, but should be treated as soon as possible to prevent them from multiplying. A major flea infestation, however—especially in young kittens and puppies—can cause severe anemia. If you notice fleas on your kitten or puppy, and your pet is pale or weak, an emergency exam by your veterinarian is recommended. You should also discuss flea prevention and deworming with your veterinarian.

### **Fractures (Broken Bones)**

**Signs:** Your pet avoids using/putting weight on a limb, limb is swollen, limb is held at an odd angle.

**What to do:** Use caution when examining a pet with a suspected broken bone; pain can trigger uncharacteristic behavior; such as biting (consider using a muzzle during your examination). See your veterinarian immediately, and do not administer pain medication or attempt to stabilize the fracture without consulting him or her.

### **Frostbite (Hypothermia)**

**Signs:** Shivering, disorientation, difficulty walking, flushed or reddened skin, stiff ear tips, tail, or other extremities (frostbite most commonly affects the tips of the ears, the tail, the scrotum, and the toes). Frostbitten tissue may at first appear pale or gray, and hard and cold. As it thaws—which is very painful—it may turn red. If frostbite is severe, the affected tissue will eventually turn black and slough off.

**What to do:** Treat frostbite with extreme care. Never rub or massage frostbitten tissue. Move your pet to a warm area, and gently warm affected areas with warm (not hot) moist towels. Stop warming when the affected areas become flushed. Do not use heating pads or electric blankets (they can cause burns). Call your veterinarian for an immediate examination. Wrap your pet in a warm, dry towel or blanket for transport to keep him warm. Do not give your pet pain medication.

### **Heatstroke**

**Signs:** Distressed/restless behavior, excessive panting and drooling, weakness, unsteady walking, bruising, gums becoming red or blue/purple, rectal temperature over 105 degrees Fahrenheit

**What to do:** These symptoms warrant immediate evaluation by a veterinarian. Remove your pet from the hot environment, cool him gradually with fans, and place him in a cool (not cold) bath or apply wet (but wrung-out) towels to his/her body (especially the head, armpits, and groin). Stop cooling your pet when his temperature reaches 103.5 degrees. Gradual reduction of body temperature is vital since rapid cooling can cause conditions to worsen.

### **Insects & Ticks**

**Signs:** Most insect bites or bee stings occur on the face and paws. Itching and swelling of the face, eyes and ears are common. Ticks are drawn to dark, hidden areas on the body. Once a tick has buried itself in your pet's skin to feed, it will become engorged with blood, creating a bump about the size of a small pea. The skin in the area may also become red or irritated, and your pet may excessively scratch or lick that area.

**What to do:** If your pet has difficulty breathing or its face, throat, or tongue swells, take your pet to a veterinarian right away. If you spot a tick, it can be removed at home using tweezers or a tick-removal tool often included in first aid kits. To remove the tick, grasp it by the head, as close to your pet's skin as possible. Avoid grasping the tick by the body since it may cause the head to break off. It may be useful to save the tick for your veterinarian to inspect; simply drop it into a sealable plastic bag. Be sure to talk to your veterinarian about tick control options.

**NOTE:** Do not use dog preventative on cats. Some canine products use permethrin which is toxic even in small quantities. Exposure can be fatal to feline with symptoms developing within a few hours or as long as up to three days.

### **Nail Damage**

**Signs:** Bleeding as a result of a nail that has been partially or completely torn off, or if accidentally cut too short.

**What to do:** Most pets with a partially torn-off nail will require veterinary care and sedation to remove the nail since it will usually continue to bleed until removed. Broken nails are very painful. If a nail is completely torn off, apply a silver nitrate stick or Kwik-Stop (styptic powder) to control bleeding (corn starch can also be used). Continued bleeding will warrant veterinary care. If you have cut your pet's nails too short, hold gauze or a cloth firmly on the cut surface until bleeding stops (it should clot within 5 minutes).

### **Pain**

**Signs:** Dogs may exhibit excessive grooming, heavy panting, lack of appetite, unusual shyness or aggression, gait changes (limping, favoring a limb), lethargy, eyes that are bloodshot, dilated or constricted pupils, squinting, hunched over or rigid posture, increased heart rate, whining/ crying, and/or struggling to urinate or defecate. Cats often

suffer in silence. Look for behavioral changes such as lack of grooming, hiding/ isolation, nonstop purring, lack of interest in food/water, abnormal body posture, irritability, hissing or growling when touched or moved.

**What to do:** Call your veterinarian for an evaluation anytime your pet appears to be in pain. Do not administer any medications without first consulting your veterinarian.

### **Poisoning**

**Signs:** Vomiting, seizures, disorientation, retching, excessive salivating, weakness, known exposure to human medications or other substances known to be toxic to animals, including:

- Alcoholic beverages
- Antifreeze
- Chocolate
- Garlic
- Grapes (and raisins)
- Onions
- Rodent poison
- Certain household plants, including
- Easter lilies
- Sugarless gum containing xylitol
- Raisins (and grapes)
- Nicotine and caffeine
- NSAIDs (acetaminophen/Tylenol, ibuprofen/Advil, naproxen)
- Macadamia nuts/walnuts
- Marijuana and other street drugs
- Yeast dough Seizures

**What to do:** Contact your veterinarian or animal emergency hospital immediately and provide information about what your pet ingested. Do not induce vomiting unless your veterinarian advises it. If local veterinary help is not available, contact the National Animal Poison Control Center at 1-888-426-4435.

→ **Please read food labels. Xylitol is a common hidden ingredient.** ←

### **Porcupine Attack**

**Signs:** Your poor pet will have up to 30,000 quills embedded into their body.

**What to do:** This is a painful life threatening emergency. Quills can penetrate deep into your pet's body especially as they paw at them. Call for immediate care and guidance on safe transportation.

### **Seizures**

**Signs:** Tremors, shaking, facial twitching, disorientation, jaw snapping, inability to walk, loss of consciousness, loss of bladder or bowel control.

**What to do:** Because biting is a risk, do not try to restrain your pet or administer medications during a seizure. Know that your pet will not swallow its tongue. Remove any nearby objects that could injure your pet, and block stairs to prevent falling. Time the length of the seizure. Call us at Greenwood Lake Animal Hospital immediately for further instructions.

### **Shock**

**Signs:** Weakness, convulsions or collapse (due to brain being starved of oxygen), unconsciousness, cold ears and paws, pale gums, rapid but weak pulse, rapid breathing, and fixated stare with dilated pupils

**What to do:** Call your veterinarian immediately. Time is critical and intravenous fluids may be required. Wrap your pet in a blanket or towel to conserve body heat during transport. If your pet is unconscious, keep the head as low as, or lower than, the rest of the body. Gently massage legs and muscles to maintain circulation (unless you suspect a broken bone). If necessary, give artificial resuscitation.

### **Skunk Exposure**

**Signs:** Unmistakable strong odor

**What to do:** If your pet goes outside, have products on hand just in case (Skunk-Off and Nature's Miracle Skunk Odor Remover are two over-the-counter products available at some pet stores and online retailers). For a home remedy, mix 1 quart hydrogen peroxide, ½ box baking soda and 1 teaspoon Dawn dish liquid, and use within one hour of mixing the ingredients. Rinse thoroughly, then you can bathe your pet with regular pet shampoo and rinse again. While skunk odor can be difficult to remove, it will dissipate over time.

### **Snake Bite**

**Signs:** Tenderness/pain and swelling at site of bite (dogs and cats are most often bitten on the muzzle), weakness, lethargy, vomiting

**What to do:** If you can identify the snake, it is helpful, but do not get close enough to risk getting bitten yourself. Keep your pet calm and contact your veterinarian. Before heading to veterinary hospital, you must confirm they have on hand anti-venom. Use caution when handling your pet since the pain from the bite may cause your pet to snap or bite. You may need to muzzle your pet for transport or wrap it in a thick blanket. Cats should be transported in a carrier. Do not apply a tourniquet, ice or compression, or cut the skin and try to suck out the venom.

### **Sun Burn**

**Signs:** The most vulnerable parts to get sunburn are the nose, ears, around the eyes, and the stomach. The first sign of sunburn is redness and tenderness; sometimes ears will become dry, cracked, or curling. Serious cases of sunburn can lead to fur loss.

**What to do:** Home remedies to soothe the pain and heal the burn include applying natural substances such as aloe vera, witch hazel (it can cool inflamed skin without the sting of alcohol), vitamin E (break open a capsule and apply contents to sunburned areas twice a day), and herbal moisturizer. The best approach is prevention: limit your pet's sun exposure, and use sunscreen on vulnerable parts (waterproof SPF 35). Contact your veterinarian or local emergency hospital if you have questions.

### **Urinary Problems**

**Signs:** Frequent attempts to urinate, straining to urinate, inability to pass urine, pain on urination, urinating outside the litter box, blood in urine

**What to do:** Urinary problems range from mild urinary tract infections to life-threatening urinary tract obstructions. Contact your veterinarian immediately if you notice any straining to urinate or other changes relating to urination. If your pet is unable to pass urine, emergency care is required immediately.

### **Vomiting**

**Signs:** Vomiting is usually preceded by nausea (drooling, frequent swallowing, yawning, smacking of lips, listlessness, hiding) and retching.

**What to do:** Frequent vomiting can be a sign of underlying gastrointestinal or other problems, such as kidney disease. Vomiting also can lead to dehydration, which can be very dangerous for dogs and cats. Contact your veterinarian for a complete evaluation to determine the cause and appropriate treatment.

## **Dog Whelping/Cat Kitting Emergencies**

**Signs:** Your mother goes into labor for two hours without a birth.

She has a green discharge from the vagina without a birth.

She is continually straining for a few minutes with a puppy/kitten or fluid filled bubble stuck in the birth canal.

She has intense contractions/straining for more than 20 minutes without a birth.

Mother is depressed, lethargic or her body temperature is more than 103°F.

She is bleeding from the vagina for more than ten minutes.

**What to do:** These symptoms can be life threatening. Call us for instruction.

## **Pet Proofing your House**

Here are some tips for making your home as safe as possible for your pets:

- Avoid poisonous plants. (For a complete list of plants that are poisonous to pets, visit [http://www.humanesociety.org/assets/pdfs/pets/poisonous\\_plants.pdf](http://www.humanesociety.org/assets/pdfs/pets/poisonous_plants.pdf)).
- Store medications out of reach in a secure cabinet (childproof containers aren't necessarily chew-proof).
- Lock up cleaning supplies (put childproof latches on cabinets).
- Safely store or dispose of potpourri oils, cigarettes, coffee grounds, alcoholic drinks, and chocolate (just a small dose of chocolate can be lethal for dogs).
- Unplug electric cords when not in use, or coat cords in a foul-tasting substances such as hot sauce or non-toxic spray available at pet supply stores to discourage chewing and prevent electrocution.
- Keep drapery and blinds cords out of reach to prevent strangling.
- Look inside the clothes dryer before closing the door (cats love to hide in dark, quiet spaces). Also check drawers, freezer, etc., before closing.
- If your cat goes in the garage, bang on the hood of the car before starting the engine (cats seeking warmth can climb under the hood).
- Clean all antifreeze off the garage floor and driveway (one taste can be lethal to pets) and store antifreeze in a secure cabinet.
- Put away all sewing and craft items (especially thread), game pieces, and small toys that can be swallowed, as well as any holiday decorations.
- Keep the toilet lid down to prevent drowning and/or ingestion of any cleaning chemicals.

## **Weather Safety Cold Weather:**

- If it's too cold for you, it's probably too cold for your pet, so keep animals inside as much as possible.
- Never shave your dog down to the skin in winter; a longer coat provides more warmth. • If your dog is short-haired, get him a coat or sweater.
- Massage a protectant (such as petroleum jelly) into paw pads to protect from salt and chemicals; booties provide even more protection.
- After walking, wash and dry your pet's feet and stomach to remove ice, salt, and chemicals.
- Bathe pets as little as possible during cold weather, as it can remove essential oils and cause dry, flaky skin. If your dog must be bathed, use a moisturizing shampoo or rinse.
- Don't leave pets alone in a car during cold weather; cars hold in the cold and can cause animals to freeze to death.

## **Warm Weather:**

- Limit exercise on hot, humid days.

- Provide ample shade and fresh water.
- If the ground is too hot for you to touch, it's too hot for your pet's paws to walk on.
- Watch for signs of heatstroke.
- Keep your home cool for your pets, even if you're not there.
- Never, ever leave your pets in a parked car, even for a few minutes.
- \* Not all dogs are natural swimmers.

## **Traveling With Your Pet**

### **By Plane:**

- Book a non-stop flight whenever possible.
- Before your trip, make sure your pet's vaccinations are current and obtain a health certificate from your veterinarian dated within 10 days of your departure. If traveling outside the U.S., contact the foreign office of the country you're traveling to for more information.
- Also check with your veterinarian for ways to relax your pet if anxiety is a concern (tranquilizing pets is generally not recommended).
- Purchase a USDA-approved shipping crate, and make sure it has proper ID and your contact information.
- \* Traveling in extreme weather (hot or cold) can be difficult on your pet if they are not in the pressurized cabin with you.

### **By Car:**

- If traveling across state lines, bring your pet's rabies vaccination record.
- Keep your pets safe and secure in a well-ventilated crate or carrier; secure it so it won't slide or shift during an abrupt stop.
- Prepare a pet-friendly travel kit.
- Pack plenty of water, and avoid feeding your pet in a moving vehicle.
- Take breaks to walk your pet and relieve its bladder and bowel.
- Never leave your pet alone in a parked vehicle.

## **Choosing an Emergency Veterinary Hospital**

### **What You Should Know**

The best time to choose a veterinary emergency hospital is when your pet doesn't need one - when you have the time and presence of mind to make a well-thought-out decision. Some criteria to keep in mind:

- Proximity: How close is the ER to your home? In an emergency, time is of the essence.
- Availability: 24/7 is best, since emergencies rarely seem to happen during regular business hours, but also research ERs that are open only on nights/weekends/holidays, when your veterinarian's office is closed.
- Staffing: Ideally, it will be staffed by veterinarians who specialize in emergency medicine, backed by a team of board-certified specialists who can handle the most serious situations. At a minimum, make sure a veterinarian is always on the premises, not just support staff. (Just because their doors are "open" 24 hours does not mean a skilled emergency veterinarian is on staff).

### **Emergency To-Go Kits**

Natural emergencies happen – and it is best to have a To-Go kit for each pet (as well as one for you). We suggest you customize your kit to pet's personal needs but in general to include the following:

- Prominently display our Pet Emergency Sticker on your home window which informs emergency responders the number and type of pet in your home and giving authorization for them to be transported to Greenwood Lake Animal

Hospital for care. (We can mail you a sticker or you can pick up one on your next visit).

- Bottled water – a week's supply per pet.
- Canned food, pet treats and a can opener.
- Medication
- Proof of ownership including microchip number and ID tags.
- Proof of recent vaccines
- Pet emergency medical bag
- Cash (ATMs may not be working or out of cash)
- Leash and pet carrier.
- Pet carrier, blanket, towel and bedding for creature comfort

**Pet Insurance:**

The best preparation for a medical emergency is through insurance so you can make medical decisions without the stress of the unexpected expenses. Pet insurance helps you cover expensive medical bills if your pet becomes ill or injured. You can also get reimbursed for preventative care, such as vaccinations and checkups, depending on the coverage you choose. People frequently buy pet insurance plans for their dog or cat to help cover the costs of emergency medical care, orthopedic surgeries, and serious illnesses, including cancer treatment. We recommend ASPCA and Trupanion.

<https://www.aspcapetinsurance.com/wecoverthat/?priorityCode=AD20549#/start>

<http://trupanion.com>

Please call us with your questions and concerns. Dr. Google did not go to veterinary school nor qualified to help you. But we did and we are and we are here for you and your companion animals!