



NORTH STAR VETS®

Veterinary Emergency Trauma & Specialty Centers

Leading the Way.

PET PARENT EMERGENCY CARE
HANDBOOK



NorthStar VETS® is dedicated to providing the most comprehensive and advanced services for all kinds of companion animals—from cats and dogs to exotics, pocket pets, reptiles and birds. As an emergency, trauma, specialty, and referral hospital, we work as an extension of, and in collaboration with, primary care veterinarians throughout the region. What’s more, we’re available 24/7 and 365 days of the year, so we’re here if an emergency were to arise. We are home to over 40 board-certified or residency-trained veterinarians and a team of over 200 dedicated and experienced team members, giving you a one-stop resource for your pet.

Our Comprehensive Specialty Services:

- Acupuncture
- Anesthesia
- Avian and Exotics
- Behavior
- Cardiology
- Clinical Pathology
- Dentistry/Oral Surgery
- Dermatology
- Emergency/Critical Care
- Integrative Medicine
- Internal Medicine
- Interventional Radiology
- Neurology
- Oncology
- Ophthalmology
- Radioiodine (I-131)
- Radiation Oncology
- Radiology
- Rehab and Pain Management
- Stem Cell Therapy
- Surgery
- Theriogenology

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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, fall, or other life-threatening situation such as illness, choking, heatstroke, insect sting, or poisoning. These are some signs that you should seek veterinary care immediately:

- Trouble breathing
- Weak or rapid pulse
- Excessive bleeding
- Trouble Walking/Paralysis (dragging)
- Body temp below 98°F or above 105°F
- Vehicular trauma
- Collapse/loss of consciousness
- Pale gums
- Seizures (first time or multiple/prolonged)
- Disorientation

Preparing For A Pet Emergency

Like the Boy Scouts' motto, the best way to deal with an emergency is to "Be Prepared:"

- Keep your family veterinarian, NorthStar VETS®, and animal poison control numbers in a visible place and add them to your speed dial.
- In one convenient place, compile: a list of your pet's meds (drug names and doses), medical records and vaccination history, microchip number or other identifying marks, pet collar/tags, and a recent photo of your pet
- Learn **basic animal first aid** from your local Red Cross or at a **NorthStar VETS®** pet first aid educational lecture.
- If you board or leave your pet with a caregiver, always give contact numbers where you can be reached in case of an emergency.
- **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** for your home and your vehicle.

Pet First Aid Kits

You can purchase pre-assembled first aid kits through pet supply stores, hunting/sporting good stores, and online resources. Keeping a first aid kit both at **home and in the car** is always a good idea since accidents can happen on the road. Look for kits with the following supplies — or create your own:



First Aid Kit Checklist

- 1" or 2" adhesive medical tape
- 2" or 4" roll gauze + gauze pads
- Bandage scissors
- Non-adhesive dressing (Vetwrap®)
- Petroleum or KY jelly
- Bulb syringe
- Ice pack
- Eye wash (saline solution)
- E-collar
- Nitrile gloves
- Nylon leash
- Blanket
- Plastic wrap
- Rectal thermometer
- Tick removal tool or tweezers
- Styptic Powder (for broken toenails)



Poison Control

If you suspect your pet has ingested something poisonous, **call poison control immediately**. NOTE: Each charges a fee payable by credit card:

- The ASPCA's National Animal Poison Control Center **(888) 426-4435 / \$ FEE**
- The Pet Poison Health Line **(855) 764-7661 / \$ FEE**

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:

- Temperature (dogs/cats): **99 F° — 102.5° F**
- Heart rate (dogs): **80–150 beats/min**, (cats): **160–120 beats/min**
- Respiratory rate (dogs/cats): **<40 breaths/min**
- Gum color (dogs/cats): pink

Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR)

If your dog or cat stops breathing, you could save its life by administering CPR. CPR helps preserve brain function until proper blood flow and breathing can be restored. To learn how to give your pet CPR, take an accredited pet first aid and CPR course from your local Red Cross. We also periodically offer pet first aid courses at NorthStar VETS®; simply call us for a schedule.

Your Primary Care Veterinarian

Just as in human medicine, it's important to have a primary care veterinarian who provides ongoing preventive care to keep your pet healthy. Your family vet should be available to diagnose and treat most illnesses/injuries during regular business hours. If advanced care is ever needed, your primary care veterinarian will refer you to the appropriate veterinary specialist at NorthStar VETS®.



NorthStar VETS® Emergency Trauma and Specialty Hospitals

If your pet needs immediate medical care, (especially after hours or when your family veterinarian is unavailable), **contact NorthStar VETS® 24-hours a day, 7 days a week by phone: (609) 259-8300** or online “live chat” with a client support representative **at northstarvets.com**. Our specially-trained veterinarians, technicians, and support teams are “at the ready” for any urgent, potentially life-threatening illnesses and injuries at a moment’s notice. NorthStar VETS® now has three locations to serve clients in New Jersey, 365 Days of the Year.



Central NJ:
315 Robbinsville-Allentown Rd.
Robbinsville, NJ 08691
MERCER COUNTY



Southern NJ:
2834 Route 73 North
Maple Shade, NJ 08052
BURLINGTON COUNTY



Jersey Shore:
507 Route 70,
Brick NJ 08723
OCEAN COUNTY

Pre-Registration With NorthStar VETS®

The faster the veterinarian can see your pet in a medical emergency, the better. We urge pet parents to pre-register pet(s) with us before there’s an emergency. This way, you don’t have to spend precious time filling out paperwork when you arrive. **Visit northstarvets.com for more information.**

Pet Insurance

There are many pet insurance companies to choose from, so be sure to carefully research which plan best fits your family’s budget and your pet’s health needs. For a list of pet insurance websites, visit: **northstarvets.com/resources-links**.

Keeping Calm in an Animal Emergency

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, a muzzle can be used to reduce the chance of being bitten. Dogs can be muzzled with a traditional leather/fabric or basket muzzle, stockings, or roll gauze. (Remember to remove the muzzle once the animal is placed in the car to allow them to pant.) Cats and other small animals may be wrapped in a towel to restrain them; **make sure the nose is uncovered so it can breathe.**

Assessing & Controlling The Situation

Evaluate your pet’s ABCs: Airway, Breathing, and Circulation, along with its vital signs (**see Vital Signs, page 5, to determine what’s normal**) so you can share this information with the emergency room team. Control any bleeding by applying direct pressure on the wound with sterile gauze and/or a towel. Then contact your veterinarian or emergency animal hospital for guidance.

Contacting A Veterinarian

If your pet emergency occurs during regular business hours, contact your primary care veterinarian to bring your pet to his/her office. If the situation warrants a visit to NorthStar VETS® Emergency Department, call us at **(609) 259-8300** to alert us that you’re bringing your pet and we can be ready for your arrival.

Transporting Your Pet Safely For 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. 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. Contact the emergency room to let them know you are coming so they may assist you when you arrive.



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 a veterinarian immediately. Do not give your pet food or water.

Allergic Reactions

Signs: Itching/redness, facial swelling, hives, vomiting, sneezing/reverse 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. If you are unable to get immediate veterinary attention, give an oral dose of Benedryl® (1 mg per pound) if not vomiting.



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 more commonly 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, Mastiffs and Saint Bernards.

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

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. **DO NOT MUZZLE.**

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, on page 14*).

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 and be evaluated by a veterinarian.

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 (Heart) Issues

Cardiac emergencies 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, blue discoloration of tongue or gums, 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).

Abdominal thrusts 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 maneuver on a pet that's not choking can cause internal injuries). To perform the maneuver:

- **Grasp your pet around the 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**

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 **and hold for 3-5 minutes before lifting the gauze**. Do not remove the wrap as it may dislodge blood clots. If the wound continues to bleed, do not remove the bandage again as you 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), reintroduce a bland diet. A bland diet consists of three parts cooked white rice with one part lean protein (**such as skinless 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.

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

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. If you have an e-collar (a pet cone), it can prevent your pet from rubbing or scratching the eye 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 with your primary care 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 your doctor.



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 first appears 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° F.

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° F.

Insect Bites/Stings: Bees / Wasps / Ticks

Signs: Most insect bites or stings occur on the face and paws, and itching and swelling of the face, eyes and ears are common. If your pet is stung or bitten on the tongue or inside their mouth, potentially, the subsequent swelling can close their throat and block their airway.

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.

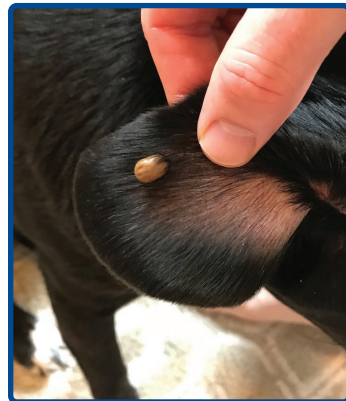
What to do: If your pet has difficulty breathing, appears weak, or its face, throat, or tongue swells, take them to a veterinarian ASAP!

TICKS:

Using tweezers grasp the tick by the head, as close to your pet's skin as possible. Avoid grasping it by the body since it may cause the head to break off.

BEES/WASPS:

A simple sting can be safely left alone. Try to remove the stinger by scraping it with a fingernail and avoid using tweezers as they may force more venom out of the stinger. Apply a weak mixture of water and baking soda to the affected area to help reduce pain. A cold compress applied to the wound for 20-30 minutes will also help reduce pain and swelling. Benadryl® may also help, but **always call your veterinarian first to verify dosage and usage.**



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: A partially torn-off nail will require veterinary care and sedation to remove it since it will usually continue to bleed until it's removed, and is very painful. If the 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 warrants veterinary care. If you have trimmed your pet's nails too short, press styptic powder up into the exposed/bleeding nail tip (you can use corn starch/baby powder/flour in a pinch). Clotting generally takes 3-5 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 doctor.

Back/Neck Pain Signs: Reluctance to jump/move around, yelping when picked up or moved, hunched or head down.

What to do: Keep confined/crated to restrict activity (no running, jumping, rough play, or off-leash activity), and seek medical attention so the appropriate pain medication can be prescribed. **(DO NOT give over-the-counter pain killers including aspirin, ibuprofen, or acetaminophen.)** Consider purchasing a chest harness for pets with a history of neck pain.

Poisoning

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

- Alcoholic Beverages
- Antifreeze
- Chocolate
- Certain Plants (including Easter Lily)
- Garlic
- Grapes and Raisins
- Onions
- Marijuana and Other street drugs
- Nicotine and Caffeine
- NSAIDs: *Acetaminophen/Tylenol®, Naproxen/Aleve®*
- *Ibuprofen/Advil®*
- Rodent Poison
- Yeast Dough
- Xylitol (artificial sweetener)
- Macadamia Nuts

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 (888) 426-4435.**

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. Call your veterinarian immediately.

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, 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. 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.



Sunburn

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 "Zinc-free" 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, dribbling urine.

What to do: Urinary problems range from mild urinary tract infections to life-threatening urinary tract obstructions. Contact your veterinarian ASAP 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.

Weather-Related

See Frostbite and Sunburn

Wounds

See Bites and Cuts



GENERAL PET SAFETY

Tips for Pet-Proofing Your Home

- Avoid poisonous plants both indoors and in your landscape. For a complete list of toxic plants, visit: [humanesociety.org/assets/pdfs/pets/poisonous_plants.pdf](https://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 (even a small dose of chocolate can be lethal for dogs).
- Unplug electric cords when not in use, or coat cords in a foul-tasting substance 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 closed to prevent drowning and/or ingestion of cleaning chemicals.

Seasonal Pet Safety

Cold Weather:

- If it's too cold for you, it's probably too cold for your pet, so keep animals inside.
- Never shave your dog down to the skin in winter (a longer coat provides warmth).
- If your dog is short-haired, dress them in 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 pet-friendly ice melt, rock salt or 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.



Warm Weather:

- Limit exercise on hot, humid days.
- Provide ample shade and fresh water.
- Keep your home cool for your pets, even if you're away.
- Watch for signs of heatstroke ([see page 12](#)).
- Never leave pets in a parked car, even for a few minutes.
- If the ground is too hot for you to touch, it's too hot for pet's delicate paw pads. Save your walks for the evening hours.



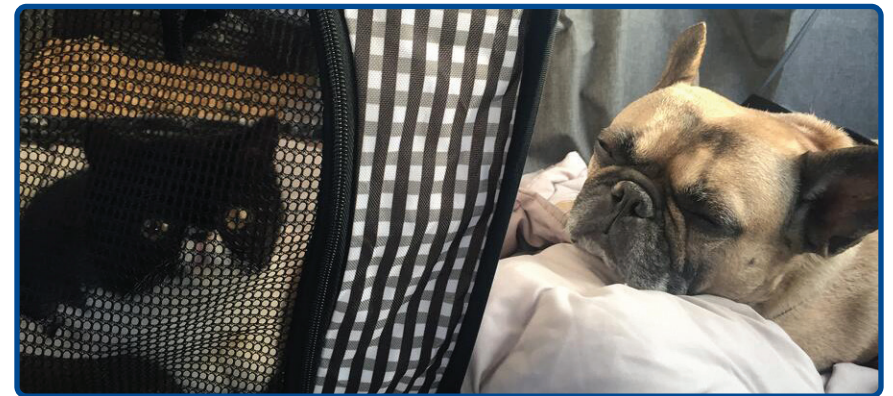
Traveling With Your Pet

By Plane:

- Book a direct 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 your primary veterinarian does not produce these certificates, we can facilitate them through NorthStar VETS®. If traveling outside the US, contact the foreign office of the country you're traveling to for more information.
- 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. Your pet should also have proper ID at all times.

Roadtrips:

- Your pet should have proper ID/collar with your cell phone number at all times.
- Remember to pack a leash with waste disposal bags attached.
- Take breaks to walk your pet and relieve its bladder and bowel.
- Prepare a pet-friendly travel kit.
- 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.
- Pack plenty of water, and avoid feeding your pet in a moving vehicle.
- Never leave your pet alone in a parked vehicle.



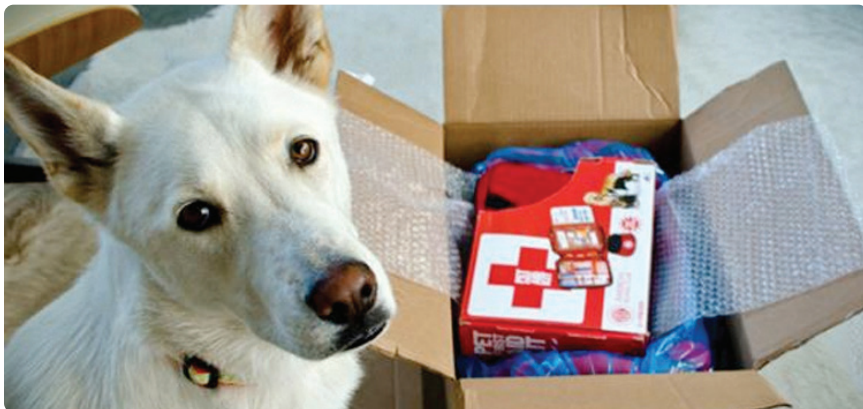
PET DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

Acts of nature such as storms, hurricanes, fires or floods could happen at any time and the thought of evacuating in an emergency is daunting. Being prepared and having a plan in place is always a great idea.

In the event of an emergency, your pets will be even more dependent on you for their safety and well-being. If you must evacuate your home during a disaster, the best way to protect your pets is to take them with you. If it's not safe for you to stay behind, then it's not safe to leave pets behind either.

Safe Places to Take Your Pets and Other Tips

- Know which hotels/motels along your evacuation route will accept pets in an emergency. Call ahead for reservations if you know you need to evacuate. Ask if "no pet policies" could be waived in an emergency.
- Have your pet microchipped by your veterinarian.
- Most American Red Cross shelters cannot accept pets because of health and safety concerns, however service animals that assist people with disabilities are permitted.
- Know which friends, relatives, boarding facilities, animal shelters or veterinarians can care for your animals in an emergency. Prepare a list with phone numbers.
- Although your animals may be more comfortable together, be prepared to house them separately.
- Include your pets in evacuation drills so that they become used to entering and traveling in their carriers calmly.
- Make sure that your pet's vaccinations are current and that all pets are wearing collars with securely fastened, up-to-date identification. Many pet shelters require proof of current vaccinations to reduce the spread of disease.



PET EMERGENCY KIT CHECKLIST

- Bottled Water (*2 week supply*)
- Pet Food – canned or stored in an airtight, waterproof container (*2 week supply/manual can opener and can lids if necessary*)
- Medications (*2 week supply in an airtight, waterproof container*)
- Pet First Aid Kit
- Travel bag / pet carrier / crate with contact info (*one for each pet*)
- Anti-anxiety vest or wrap (*one for each pet*)
- Pet collar / harness / leash with updated ID tags (*cats/dogs*)
- Sturdy long leash / yard stake / mallet (*dogs*)
- Gentle restraints (*for anxious/fearful pets*)
- Pet waste disposal bags / Litter tray and litter (*cats*)
- Food and water bowls
- Flashlight and cellphone charger
- Comfort Items: pet bedding / blankets / towels / treats / toys
- Cleaning supplies for bathroom accidents (*paper towels, plastic bags, trash bags, disinfectants / sanitizers*)

IMPORTANT PET INFORMATION

Stored In Waterproof Container And On Your Smartphone

- Vet records (*rabies certificate/vaccinations/medications list*)
- Contact information: for your vet, yourself, and friends/family
- Pet feeding schedules/medical conditions/behavior issues
- Microchip records
- Recent photos of pet(s) (*to eliminate mistaken identity and confusion*)
- Proof of pet ownership or adoption records



NORTHSTAR VETS®

Veterinary Emergency Trauma & Specialty Center

Leading the Way.



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MERCER COUNTY



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