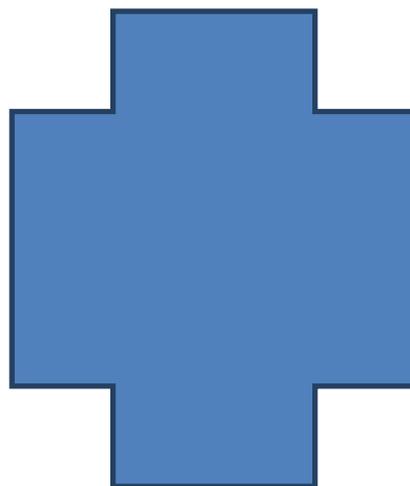


# Basic First Aid for Your Dog

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*Written By Sarah Christ ©2015*

# Introduction

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*Would you know what to do if your dog had collapsed or was injured?*

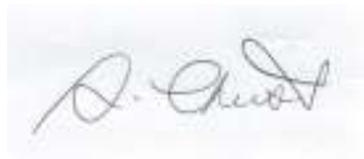
Firstly, I am not a vet, nor do I pretend to be one. This book is not intended as a treatment guide, and proper vet care and consultation should be sought immediately after any first aid treatment.

My own experiences and those of others within the pet dog industry have contributed to the following pages. The material in this book has been extensively researched from many professional and volunteer organisations and professional articles.

This electronic book was written to assist everyday Australians that own a dog. By learning the information presented in this book you may save your dog's life, preventing a tragedy. It is hoped that owners will feel empowered to respond in an emergency. This is the inspiration for writing the book. This book enables you to perform basic first aid as a dog owner, or worker within the dog industry.

This book is copyright, and should only be copied in its original form. No changes are permitted and it is free for private use only. Print a copy as a ready reference for your home or car. If you find the book useful feel free to donate to any dog refuge or dog charity.

Regards

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'S. Christ', written in dark ink on a light-colored background.

Sarah Christ

# Caution Must Be Observed When Administering First Aid on Dogs

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Whenever any dog, including your own dog is injured, in pain or poisoned the dog will be scared and frightened. Therefore administering first aid to any dogs, the following points need to be considered for your safety and theirs.

1. Avoid being bitten, apply a muzzle where prac table
2. Where possible prevent the injured dog from moving to prevent further injury to you or itself.
3. Always take the dog to a vet as soon as possible for further treatment.

## A Healthy Dog

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**The normal temperature** of a dog is between 37.8 and 39.1 degrees Celsius. For a puppy this varies slightly and is between 35.5 and 36.1 degrees Celsius.

**The normal pulse** of a dog is between 70-180 beats per minute. Larger dogs normally have a lower pulse. Puppies have a faster pulse, and this can be up to 220 beats per minute.

**The normal breathing** rate for a dog at rest is between 20-40 breaths per minute. As a guide, smaller dogs take fewer breaths per minute than a large dog.

## How to Take a Dogs Pulse

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As stated above the normal pulse for a dog is between 70-180 beats per minute. Puppies' heart rate is around 220 beats per minute. This may seem an extreme range, however when we consider the various breeds and sizes of dogs can we understand the variation. Remember larger dogs have a slower pulse than smaller dogs.

Remember when feeling for a pulse, do not use your thumb, as it has its own pulse, and you may not get an accurate reading. Using two fingers is the preferred method. The dogs' heart beat is not regular, and may change as the dog breathes in or out.

The best place to feel the heartbeat of your dog is the femoral artery on the rear leg. Place your fingers on the artery on the inner thigh. You should be able to see or feel the artery where the upper part of the thigh joins the body.

Count the beats for 15 seconds and then multiply by 4. This will give you, your dog's heart rate. Remember if your dog has been exercising or is injured the heart rate will be faster than normal.

Practice this with your dog before and after exercise to discover the recovery rate of your dog's heartbeat. How long does it take to return to normal?

## How to Take a Dogs Temperature

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To take your dogs' temperature you will need a rectal or digital thermometer. These can be picked up at discount chemists for around \$5. You do not need a special "Dogs Thermometer" The ones we humans use will do. It is easier if there are two people taking the temperature, as one can be reassuring the dog and keeping him calm. You should always reassure the dog, talking to him quietly whilst taking the temperature.

As previously indicated the normal temperature of a dog is between 37.8 and 39.1 degrees Celsius. For a puppy this varies slightly and is between 35.5 and 36.1 degrees Celsius.

If using a non-digital thermometer ensure the temperature is about 35.5° Celsius, then;

- Place some lubricant or KY Jelly on the end
- For small dogs insert into the anus approximately 2.5cm
- For medium to large dogs insert into the anus approximately 5cm
- For giant dog breeds insert into the anus up to 7.5cm
- Leave the thermometer in place for 1-2 minutes
- Clean the end of the thermometer with a cotton bud
- Read and record the temperature
- Clean the end of the thermometer with a sterile solution, ready for the next use.

If using a digital thermometer;

- Place some lubricant or KY Jelly on the end

- Insert into the dogs' anus approximately 2cm (The silver coloured piece at the end of the thermometer needs to be completely inside the anus).
- Leave the thermometer in place until it beeps, indicating a reading
- Read and record the temperature
- Clean the end of the thermometer with a sterile solution, ready for the next use.

## How to Take a Dogs Respiratory Rate

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The normal breathing rate for a dog at rest is between 20-40 breaths per minute. As a guide, smaller dogs take fewer breaths per minute than a large dog.

While your dog is resting watch the rise and fall of his chest. One rise and fall of the chest is equal to one breath.

Count how many breaths are taken in one minute, this is the respiratory rate. As with taking the dogs pulse, you can discover the dogs' recovery rate after exercise by checking breathing at regular intervals.

## CPR

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If your dog becomes unconscious for any reason, respiratory arrest may occur, followed by cardiac arrest (Heart Attack). A dog's heart may continue to beat for several minutes after respiratory arrest. To save the dog's life artificial respiration must be carried out if respiratory arrest occurs. If the heart has stopped cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) must also be commenced. Always check for danger; never put yourself in harm's way, or risk of injury.

To perform artificial respiration, follow these steps;

- Place your dog on his side.
- Check to see if there is any rise or fall in his chest and feel for any breath by placing 2 fingers near his nose/mouth. If any breathing is detected **DO NOT** perform artificial respiration.
- Check the dogs' gums, as these will turn from red to a blue to the lack of oxygen.
- As with humans check the airway for obstructions. Extend the head and neck, pull out the tongue. Use your fingers to remove any foreign matter blocking the airway. If the foreign object will not dislodge use the Heimlich manoeuvre.
- With the airways clear commence artificial respiration.

- With one hand hold his mouth shut, and lift the chin up, straightening the throat.
- Place your mouth over the dogs' nose and breathe hard enough to allow the chest to move. The dogs' size will determine how hard you need to blow air into the lungs.
- Once the lungs are exhaled, apply another breath, you should give 20 breaths per minute.
- Remember to monitor the dogs' heartbeat during this process. Continue artificial respiration until the dog breathes on his own.
- Take the dog to the vet / emergency vet as soon as possible.

If the dogs' heart has stopped CPR must be commenced.

To perform CPR, follow these steps

***For small dogs, that is dogs weighing less than 14 kilos;***

- Place your dog on his side, on a flat area.
- Place your palm over his heart, approximately in the centre of the rib cage. (This is where the dogs front elbow would be if in the drop, or laying position)
- Compress the chest about 2½ centremetres
- Approximately 80-100 compressions are required per minute.
- For one person performing CPR, 1 breath followed by 5 compressions is required.
- For 2 people performing CPR, 1 breath followed by 3 compressions.

***For l dogs weighing more than 14 kilos;***

- Place your dog on his side, on a flat area.
- Place your palm over his heart, approximately in the centre of the rib cage. (This is where the dogs front elbow would be if in the drop, or laying position)
- Compress the chest about ¼ of the width of the chest.
- Approximately 80 compressions are required per minute.
- For one person performing CPR, 1 breath followed by 5 compressions is required.
- For 2 people performing CPR, 1 breath followed by 3 compressions.

Continue CPR until your dog is breathing on his own and has a steady heartbeat. CPR can be performed on the way to the vet. Always take your dog to the vet after artificial respiration or CPR is performed.

# The Heimlich Manoeuvre on Dogs

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The Heimlich manoeuvre on dogs should only be used on dogs if there is an obstruction of the airway. If the dogs tongue is blocking the airway pull it out and provide first aid as required. If there is a foreign object that cannot be removed or dislodged using your fingers the Heimlich manoeuvre should be used. It is noteworthy to mention that if a wheezing or gasping is heard, that some air is getting to the dogs lungs. This should not cause panic. Instead ensure there are no other injuries that could be causing the wheezing or gasping.

Remember that after you have completed your first aid, the dog needs to be taken to the vet or emergency after hours vet. It is always advisable to have these contact details stored in your mobile phone and your dog's first aid kit. It would also be advisable to have them on your fridge door or other easy to find location. In an emergency, call the vet and let them know you are coming with a brief description of the dogs' injuries.

If you can lift your dog, follow the this procedure

1. Open the dogs' mouth and look for the obstruction or foreign object.
2. With an unconscious dog grab the tongue and pull it out, attempting to dislodge any foreign objects blocking the airway.
3. Whether the dog is consciousness or unconscious, use your finger to clear the dog's mouth in an effort to feel for any foreign objects and attempt to remove them.
4. Where the foreign object cannot be removed, lift the dog and placing the dog's spine against your chest. Place your hands under the dogs' ribcage where the bottom of the "V" of his chest meets the waist line. Make a fist with one hand and grip the other hand over your fist. Your hands should be together behind the last rib. Administer abdominal thrusts by pushing up and in with your fist quickly 5 times.
5. Open the dogs' mouth and look for the obstruction or foreign object. Once more attempt to dislodge any foreign objects blocking the airway.
6. If the foreign object has not dislodged, hold the dog in a sitting position, administering five sharp blows with an open hand between the shoulder blades. Be cautious so not to strike the dogs' spine which could cause further injury.
7. Open the dogs' mouth and look for the obstruction or foreign object. Once more attempt to dislodge any foreign objects blocking the airway.
8. Continue steps 2 to 7 until the foreign object is dislodged.

Should the dog become unconscious during the Heimlich manoeuvre, conduct artificial respiration by giving 5 breaths followed by 5 abdominal thrusts (Step 4 above). Continue this until the foreign object is removed or dislodged.

If your dog is too heavy to lift, but is conscious, follow steps 1-3 above, then place your dog in a standing position and leaning over the dog, place your hands around his waist, and as previously described (Step 4 above) administer the abdominal thrusts. If the foreign object is not removed or dislodged, raise your dogs' hind legs so his head is lower than his hind legs. Administer 5 sharp blows to the shoulder blades as previously described (Step 6 above).

If the dog is too heavy to lift and unconscious follow steps 1-3 above, lay the dog on his right side, and then kneel with the dogs feet facing you. Place your palms of your hand in the "V" area of the dogs' chest, just behind the ribs. Pushing in and up, administer 5 quick abdominal thrusts. Continue this until the foreign object is removed.

Check the dogs' vital signs, airway, breathing and circulation. Commence CPR if necessary and take the dog to the vet as soon as possible. Continue CPR in the car on the way to the vet if necessary.

## Burns

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Burns that your dog may suffer are likely to arise from a hot surface or items around the house. One of the best methods of reducing the risk of burns to your dog is to ban him from the kitchen. Our dogs are not permitted into the kitchen ever. Burns are traumatic and painful for your dog.

Burns can permanently damage and disfigure. There are three types of sources that can cause burns these are;

- Thermal
- Chemical
- Radiation

Thermal burns are caused by things such as open flames, boiling liquids and electric shock. Hair dryers, heat lamps and hot metal surfaces can also cause thermal burns. This should be considered when walking your dog, the time of day and the surface you are walking on. The pads on your dog are very sensitive to heat.

Chemical burns are as the name suggests, caused by many of the items in our homes and sheds. These items include acids, caustic cleaning products and petroleum products, this list is not exhaustive, and labels should be read and products out of reach.

Radiation burns are burns that are caused by things such as microwaves, being too close to a fire or sunburn. Dogs can get sunburn when they have been clipped to short and the skin is exposed to the sun.

Superficial wounds, such as sunburn, which only burns the top layer of the skin are 1<sup>st</sup> degree burns. These types of burns usually cause minor pain and redness to the exposed area. This will usually clear up in a few days and provided the dog is not continually exposed to the source of the burn. 1<sup>st</sup> degree burns usually do not require vet attention.

Blisters forming on the skin are 2<sup>nd</sup> degree burns and affect the deeper layers of the skin. Chemical wounds can cause blisters as can severe sunburn. There is a risk of infection should blisters burst, they are more painful than 1<sup>st</sup> degree burns. 2<sup>nd</sup> degree burns take longer to heal, and because of the risk of infection a vet should be consulted.

Burns that completely destroy the skin tissue are 3<sup>rd</sup> degree burns. There is no feeling in the area and the skin is blackened. Dogs with 3<sup>rd</sup> degree burns risk bacterial infections. Circulation and the immune system to the burned area are greatly impacted. 3<sup>rd</sup> Degree burns are life threatening and require immediate veterinary care.

## FIRST AID FOR BURNS

If your dog has suffered sunburn, take the dog to your veterinarian for treatment. Do not apply ice, butter or ointments unless advised by your vet. If your dog has exposed skin sunscreen can be used as a preventative measure to reduce the risk of sunburn. Do not use any that contain zinc. Prevent your dog from licking any sunscreen that has been applied.

### For thermal burns;

- Extinguish the flames or remove your dog from the source
- If from electric shock, ensure power is off
- Using a clean sterile cloth apply cool water compresses to the affected area. The compresses need to be changed frequently. Affected parts of the body can be submerged in cool water.
- **DO NOT** puncture blisters.
- **DO NOT** apply ice, butter or ointments
- Take your dog to the vet

### For chemical burns;

- Make sure the area is ventilated
- Dry chemical burns, brush away as much dry chemical as possible, protecting the dogs' eyes, nose and mouth.
- Wash the affected area with large quantities of warm water.
- If chemical is in eyes, flush eyes with clean water for approximately 20 minutes.

- **DO NOT** puncture blisters.
- **DO NOT** apply ice, butter or ointments
- Take your dog to the vet

## For smoke inhalation

Dogs exposed to bush fires or burning buildings need to be assessed by a vet, as they may suffer from;

- Heat damage to the throat from inhalation
- Toxic fumes from burning material
- Carbon monoxide poisoning

# Electric Shock

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Puppies and young dogs, explore their surroundings, and love to play. This of course includes chewing. If you keep your dog inside, there are usually many electrical extension leads powering your household appliances. This can be a virtual playground for your puppy. Be aware when working outside with electrical extension leads, as you move leads around, your puppy will see this as an invitation to play. Always be aware that electricity is an unseen danger. Make sure it is **SAFE** to approach or pick up your dog if you suspect electric shock as the cause.

Prevention is always better than cure, so there are some things you can do to avoid this risk;

- Provide you puppy with a Nyla-Bone or soft toy to chew, that he knows is his.
- Watch your puppy and correct his behaviour early on, in his new environment. Puppies learn quickly what **NOT** to touch. They want to please you, as you are the Alpha in their pack.
- Where you can, turn appliances off at the wall.
- Place electrical extension leads where they are not easily accessible.
- Dogs do not like the smell of Dettol, so cords could be wiped with Dettol. Make sure they are turned off at the wall or unplugged before applying.
- Pet proof electrical cords can be purchased.

Electric shocks are potentially life threatening for your dog. If you are aware that your dog has had an electric shock, seek vet advice immediately. Monitor your dog closely until you get him to the vet. After electric shock a dogs lungs may fill with fluid, making it difficult for him to breath. This can occur over several days, and if left untreated the dog may die.

The signs and symptoms of electrical shock may include;

- Severe burn around the tongue and mouth, ensure to check the roof of the mouth. This may appear red and irritated.
- Difficulty in breathing due to the damaged lung.

Veterinarians have medications that can help with lung or burn damage. If you suspect that an electrical shock has occurred, take your dog to the vet. In extreme cases where your dog is not breathing CPR may be administered.

## Cuts and Abrasions

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Cuts and abrasions are possibly the most common and easiest to treat depending on the severity of the cut.

Abrasions and small cuts should be;

- Cleaned and a sterile dressing applied.

For deeper cuts;

- Place gauze over the wound, place several layers if required.
- Once blood flow has been stemmed, apply a suitable bandage around the wound to keep the gauze in place and blood flow stemmed.
- Ensure bandaging is not too tight. You should be able to place a finger between the bandage and the dogs' fur.

For impalements;

- **DO NOT** remove the foreign object.
- Create a donut bandage by wrapping a roll of gauze or bandage around your hand.
- Place the donut bandage around the impaling object.
- Bandage around the wound to prevent movement of the foreign object.
- Stem the flow of blood.

In all these instances veterinarian help should be sought to prevent infection. For impalements and serious deep cuts emergency veterinarian help is required immediately.

A blanket or towel can be used to make a temporary stretcher to support the dog during transport. Care must be taken not to further injure the dog. Where more than one person is available, the wound site and the dogs' condition should be monitored until the vet is reached. If possible contact your vet to let him know you are coming where the injury is life threatening.

## Fractures and Broken Bones

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Fractures and broken bones are caused when bones are suddenly impacted causing undue stress on the skeleton. This can come in the form of a blow to the body, crashing into a solid immovable object or the movement of the body in an abnormal way.

There are four types of fracture. Closed fractures are fractures where the skin is not broken. In hairline fractures the bone is not completely broken, whilst compound fractures are a complete break of the bone. The final fracture is a epiphyseal fracture commonly seen in dogs under 12 months where the bones have not completely calcified. Due to the nature of puppies and play, usually these breaks can occur in front or hind legs.

Fractured or broken bone may be suspected if your dog;

- Possible swelling around the bones.
- The leg is raised and the paw is not placed on the ground
- The leg is placed on the ground with a severe limp, possibly a sprain.
- The dog may show signs of pain.

With a broken rib the dog may be an unsteady on his feet, and breathing may not be regular.

If you suspect a spinal injury, do not move the dog. Attempt to immobilise the dog where he is and call the vet for advice. Any movement may result in a broken back and paralysis.

Attempt to bandage and immobilise other fractures and take the dog to the vet. Fractures can cause infections and further complications if not treated immediately.

## Allergies

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Allergies can be caused by drugs prescribed or other, chemicals, some foods or exposure to the sun. In dogs this can lead to a swollen face.

Our dog Darbi (*Hebrew for dearly loved*) was swimming at a local spot we had attended on many occasions. On this occasion after about 30 minutes his face started to swell. By the time we got to the vet his face had doubled in size. We called the vet to advise him we were coming. We were lucky to have reacted quickly as the swelling could have seriously affected his breathing.

Our vet gave him a shot of antihistamine and some medication. He explained that there are a thousand plus things that could have caused the reaction, and trying to find the cause wasn't necessary. The treatment for an allergy of this type was common, though necessary to stop further complications.

Hives, facial swelling, and itching as they are commonly called may show as small bumps in the skin, hair stand up over these bumps. Swelling can be severe to the point where the dog can't open his eyes. The face becomes swollen as was the case with Darbi. Hives and facial swelling occur within 20 minutes of coming into contact with the allergic substance. If treated these conditions are not life threatening.

Antihistamines are used for treatment, as was Darbi's case; in severe cases steroids can be used. Seek vet assistance immediately. The vet may be able to supply an antihistamine for your 1<sup>st</sup> aid kit.

## Bites and Stings

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March flies, Horse flies and House flies can cause nasty bites around a dog's ear, especially in the country and outback. Dogs kept outside are more likely to be bitten. Bites can be nasty with bite marks and scabs. In severe cases flies may also lay their eggs, which later become maggots.

Gently clean the ears with warm water and antiseptic soap. A topical antibiotic cream can also be used on the affected area. If the bites are severe or maggots are present, take your dog to the vet.

**Bee and Wasp stings** can be identified by local inflammation of the stung area. This can appear within 20 minutes of being stung, causing swelling. Common areas stung are the face, head and mouth. The feet and stomach may also be stung. The dog should be monitored over a 24 hour period to ensure the inflammation does not get worse.

The first aid treatment is to get advice from your vet. Stings can be removed by scraping away from the skin. Swelling can affect the dogs breathing, and depending on the quantity and severity of stings may be fatal if not treated.

**Ant Bites** can be identified by local inflammation of the stung area similar to bee and wasp stings. These also appear within 20 minutes of being bitten causing swelling. Common areas bitten are the feet and stomach. The nose and mouth could also be affected by bites. The dog should be monitored over a 24 hour period to ensure the inflammation does not get worse.

The first aid treatment is to get advice from your vet. Calamine lotion can be applied to stop itching.

**Snake Bites** Australia has some of the most venomous snakes in the world. Two puncture marks may be visible. It is a help if you can identify the type of snake. Due to the venom and its potency the dog may go into respiratory and cardiac failure, requiring CPR. Unfortunately the prognosis is poor so time is of the essence; the vet needs to know you are coming. CPR can be conducted in the car if necessary. Never try to cut the puncture marks to release venom. Do not apply a tourniquet; instead try to restrict movement, which will assist in slowing the venom.

**Spider Bites.** Red back spiders and funnel web spiders are the most likely to bite your dog, as they are common in populated areas. As with snake bite the dog needs to be taken straight to the vet. Signs and symptoms may include seizures, difficulty in breathing and increased heart rate. As in snake bites, CPR may need to be carried out. Let your vet know you are coming, and attempt to keep the dog still.

**Cane Toads** secrete mucus through their skin. If a dog licks a Cane toad the effects can be deadly and symptoms appear within 15-20 minutes. Cane toads are common throughout Queensland and can be found in northern NSW. If you live in an area where Cane toads are common, the dogs water bowls should not be left out overnight.

Head shaking, drooling, howling, pawing at the mouth and vomiting are some signs and symptoms.

Wash the mouth out with large amounts of water from a hose or creek and take your dog to the vet immediately

This is not an exhaustive list of insects and animals that can be dangerous to your dog. Be aware of the insects and animals where you live that can be poisonous or toxic to your dog.

## Poisons and Toxic Foods

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Listed below are a list of medications, foods and plants that are poisonous and toxic to your dog. The list is not an exhaustive list. The list highlights the unseen dangers to dogs. Remember they are not human and their bodies will react differently to common products in the home and plants in the garden. There are also products and plants that are toxic or poisonous to both dogs and humans.

If you think your dog has eaten or chewed any of these you should consult with your vet immediately. As an example, one adult dose of extra strength aspirin contains 500mg of aspirin. A toxic dose of aspirin for a dog is 24mg per kilo of body weight. A 20kg dog would be affected by just one aspirin. The list is for toxic amounts where your dog shows abnormal signs and symptoms. You should monitor your dog's condition for at least 24 hours.

Some signs and symptoms may include joint stiffness, tremors, and listlessness, hind leg paralysis vomiting and abdominal pain. Depending on the toxin one or more of these symptoms may be visible.

So let's start our list

PRODUCT	FIRST AID TREATMENT	VET CONSULT NEEDED
Aspirin	Nil	Yes
Bleaches	On skin – Wash off	Monitor skin reaction
	Ingested –Give Milk	Yes
Chocolate	Induce Vomiting	Yes
Coffee / Caffeine / Tea	Induce Vomiting	Yes
Grapes, Sultanas & Raisins	Induce Vomiting	Yes
Macadamia Nuts	Induce Vomiting if eaten in last hour	Yes
Mushrooms/Toadstools	Nil	Yes
Onions and Garlic	On skin – Wash off	Yes
	Ingested –Induce Vomiting	Yes

A list of the more common plants, poisonous to dogs is below. Please contact your vet if you suspect your dog has eaten or chewed any of these plants. Signs and symptoms will vary depending on the plant eaten.

Aloe Vera	Foxglove	Nightshade	Stinging Nettle
Apple seeds	Gladiola	Peach, wilting leaves and stone	Tobacco
Apricot (Stone)	Hydrangea	Poinsettia	Tomato Plant – All except ripe fruit
Azalea	Iris	Poison Ivy	Water Hemlock
Begonia	Ivy	Poppy	Weeping Fig
Bird of Paradise	Lantana	Potato-All green parts	Wisteria
Cherry, seeds, leaves and stone	Marigold	Precatory Bean	
Chives	Marijuana	Rhubarb	
Chrysanthemum	Mistletoe	Ribbon Cactus	
Daffodil	Moses In A Cradle	Rubber Tree	
Eucalyptus	Morning Glory	Sorghum	

# Heatstroke

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As discussed earlier the normal temperature of a dog is between 37.8 and 39.1 degrees Celsius. A dog is suffering from mild or moderate heatstroke when his temperature is between 40 and 41 degrees Celsius. At this point the dog needs to be cooled down quickly to prevent permanent damage. This can be achieved using several methods, and these can be used in conjunction with each other.

Take the dog into a shaded area, a breeze would be a bonus. A small fan can also be used, ensuring it is not on its highest setting. An air conditioned room can also be beneficial if available. Give the dog access to water and encourage him to drink. His paws can be placed in water to cool the pads; this will help to lower his temperature. Finally a wet towel can be draped over the dogs' shoulders. Care should be taken to ensure the water is not too cold, as cooling down too quickly can result in other complications.

If your dog has a temperature above 41 degrees Celsius, the dog has severe heatstroke and should be taken to the vet immediately. Keep the dog cooled down as much as possible. Do not use ice or iced water as this may lead to shock or possibly heart failure.

# Frostbite

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Living in Queensland Australia, I seldom think of the risks of frostbite, but it can happen to dogs in freezing and sub zero conditions. Commonly affected areas include the toes, feet, tail, ears and scrotum.

Affected areas of frostbite are pale or gray in colour, cold and hard. If the affected area thaws out, it will redden before eventually turning black. This will occur over several days.

If you suspect frostbite, you should;

- **DO NOT** perform first aid if the affected area cannot be kept warm.
- Using warm water (40°-42° Celsius) rapidly warm the affected area. This can be done with compresses or soaking the affected area.
- Once the area is sufficiently warmed dry the affected area.
- **DO NOT** massage the affected area.
- **DO NOT** administer any medication for pain unless directed to by your vet.

# Hypothermia

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When the body temperature of your dog is too low to function normally, it has hypothermia. Small and short haired dogs kept outside in wet and cold conditions without shelter are at risk.

Symptoms of hypothermia include slow and shallow breathing, shivering which is violent, and a slower than normal heartbeat. The dogs gums may be pale similar to frostbite. If the dogs' body temperature is too low, it may not return to normal without veterinary treatment. This can then cause further damage to other organs with fatal consequences.

If your dog has hypothermia, you should;

- Put the dog in a warm room.
- Wrap the dog in warm blankets. (Put blankets in a dryer for a few minutes if possible).
- Fill soft drink bottles with warm water, wrapped in a towel. Place these under armpits or groin area.
- A hairdryer can be used if the dog is wet. Use a low setting and ensure you hold it far enough away, so not to burn your dog.
- Contact your vet to get advice while warming the dog. Take your dog to the vet as soon as possible.

# Making a First Aid Kit for Dogs

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First aid kits for dogs are not hard to make. Use a food container to store the items in and label the kit as a "DOG 1<sup>st</sup> AID KIT" or similar. You can buy ready-made kits, but making one yourself will be more cost effective and contain items relevant to your location and needs. I recommend one for the house and one for the car.

Your kit should have contact details of your vet and emergency vet. Keep in mind if travelling to have contact numbers available for the area you are in.

So let's make a first aid kit for dogs, include;

- A printed version of this book
- Emergency contact details for vets
- Muzzle
- Scissors
- Tweezers, flat and pointed
- Metal nail file and nail clippers
- Small torch
- Eye Dropper

- Makeshift leash
- Rectal thermometer
- Clean tea towel
- KY Jelly or similar lubricant
- Thermal blanket
- Cold / Heat Pack

Now for the expendable items, these are items that need replacing if used or become out of date. You can buy containers to have small quantities available, ensuring they are correctly labelled.

- Disposable gloves
- Cotton swabs and cotton balls
- Square gauze in various sizes
- Non-stick pads
- Paper and adhesive tape
- Bandages – Gauze and vet wrap
- Band aids
- Gatorade for rehydration
- Sugar satchels
- Antihistamine (See your vet for advice).
- Betadine disinfectant
- Ear cleaning solution
- Eye Drops
- Sterile saline

There other items that can be added for allergic reactions and pain killers. These need to be sourced from your vet, as many medications for humans are poisonous and even fatal to dogs.