

# YOUR GOOD HEALTH

## First-aid kit for pets

Items every pet owner should keep at hand

By JoAnne Viviano

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The key to a healthy pet is to see a veterinarian at least once a year and stay up to date on appropriate vaccinations, including those that protect against rabies for dogs and upper respiratory infections in cats, said Dr. Robert Knapp of Knapp Veterinary Hospital in Clintonville, Ohio.

But there are some eight things you should keep on hand at home:

### 1. Prescription heart-worm prevention

Protect your pet against this potentially fatal disease, which is caused by worms in the heart, lungs and certain blood vessels.

### 2. Prescription flea and tick prevention

It's also important for preventing diseases that can be fatal.

### 3. Gauze bandages and adhesive tape

These can cover cuts or wounds until you can get to an veterinary emergency department.

### 4. Milk of magnesia

This can absorb poisons eaten by a pet. Always contact your veterinarian before using.

### 5. Hydrogen peroxide

This can induce vomiting if a pet eats something it shouldn't. Always contact your veterinarian before using.

### 6. Over-the-counter eyewash

It's safe to use if your pet is squinting a lot or has dust in his or her eyes.

### 7. Water

Pets should have free access to water at all times, unless there is a medical reason to limit it.

### 8. Exercise

Remember not to overdo it. Pets might need to get conditioned in the spring if they've spent most of the winter sitting on the couch.

"Pets have to get acclimated, too. Sometimes we forget pets haven't been as active, and we need to work our way up to that," Knapp said.

Should you use antihistamines and other over-the-counter medications? It depends, so you should ask your vet.

Keep in mind that some medications that are safe for humans are not safe for animals. For example, acetaminophen, the drug in Tylenol, can be fatal to cats, Knapp said. And some flavorings and sweeteners can also be toxic to pets.

"Just because it's OK for us doesn't mean it's OK for pets," Knapp said.

However, being a good pet owner isn't so much a matter of what you have, but what you do, said Dr. Michelle Matusicky of the College of Veterinary Medicine at Ohio State University.

"The best owners are those who not only provide for their general necessities, but do things for them and with them: they go for walks, they play fetch, they provide enrichment to their pets on a daily basis," she said.

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It's important to have a first-aid kit for your pet, too. Here's everything you need in your furry friend's kit.

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at @JoAnneViviano.

## How to perform CPR on a dog or cat

According to the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA), if your pet needs CPR you should:

1. Check to see if your pet is breathing. If not, place your dog or cat on its side and begin CPR.
2. Administer rescue breaths. Gently extend your pet's neck, then holding its jaws closed, form a seal by placing your mouth over your pet's nose. Blow into its nostrils every 3 seconds. Make sure that no air escapes between your mouth and its nose.
3. Pump hard, pump fast. If you don't feel a heartbeat, deliver 3 quick chest compressions for every breath administered.
4. Continue administering pet CPR until your dog or cat begins breathing again on its own.

Note that as a general precaution, be sure to locate a 24-hour veterinary service in your area. This way, if something happens and your dog or cat needs urgent care, you'll know where to go for help and can get it there quickly.

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