

# Pet First Aid: Be Prepared

Guelph, ON – First-aid is immediate care that can be provided by pet owners in certain types of emergency situations.

Scarlett Wong is a Registered Veterinary Technician (RVT) and board-certified veterinary technician specialist in emergency and critical care medicine (VTS-ECC). She says a common mistake pet owners make is to “wait it out” for their pet to get better on its own.

“Some situations are time sensitive for effective treatments,” says Wong. “For example, the survival outcome of a pet that ingests poison is much better if it’s treated within 1-2 hours of ingestion versus a day later.”

Pet owners should seek veterinary care if concerned about their pet’s condition, and they can help by providing basic first-aid before a veterinarian can be seen.

## Bleeding

If your pet is bleeding, Wong says to gently compress the injured area with a clean cloth until the bleeding is under control.

## Breathing

If your cat or dog stops breathing, cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) can be performed to maintain blood flow and oxygen to the brain until the heart beats on its own again.

Wong says to observe the rise and fall of your pet’s chest for 10-15 seconds.

“If the pet remains unconscious and no chest movement is observed,” she says, “CPR must begin immediately to save the pet’s life.”

To perform basic CPR, follow these ABCs:

- **Airway:** Open the pet’s mouth and make sure the air passage is clear. Remove any obstructions.
- **Breathing:** Close the pet’s mouth tightly while the neck is extended to further open the airway. Make a seal by covering the pet’s nostrils with your mouth. **Blow two full breaths into the nostrils per 30 chest compressions.**
- **Circulation:** Lay the pet on a flat surface on its side. Place one hand over the heart for cats or small dogs. For larger dogs, place both hands over the widest area of the chest.
- **Compress 30 times** at a 1:1 ratio with a depth of 1/3 to 1/2 the width of the chest, followed by two full breaths.
- **Check for breathing** after two full minutes of the compressions/breathing cycle. Continue this cycle while en route to the veterinary clinic.

Wong suggests checking with your veterinary healthcare team to learn more about animal first-aid and CPR workshops in your area.

## Contact:

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