

Keep this handy, on your refrigerator or bulletin board.

## Canine Emergencies

**Call your veterinarian *immediately* if any of these occur.**

### General Guidelines

- Any problem that persists longer than 24 hours.
- Any problem that worsens over several hours.
- Any problem associated with systemic signs, such as lethargy, loss of appetite, weakness, and fever.
- Body temperature less than 100°F or greater than 104°F.
- Any indication that more than one body system (GI, urinary, neurological) is affected.

### Gastrointestinal Problems

- Frequent bouts of vomiting or diarrhea resulting in loss of large volumes of fluid.
- Inability to drink or keep water down.
- Blood or black material (digested blood) in the vomit or stool.
- More than three to four episodes of vomiting or diarrhea in a puppy or in a dog older than 8 years.
- Vomiting following suspected ingestion of foreign material (toys, garbage, rocks, etc.).
- Suspected poisoning.
- Suspected bloat.

### Bleeding

- Bleeding from any body cavity (nose, mouth, anus).
- Bleeding accompanied by bruising of the skin, especially the abdominal skin.
- Bleeding that can't be stopped by pressure application.
- When you think blood loss has been excessive.
- Weakness, difficulty breathing, or reluctance to move after a bleeding episode.

### Lameness

- Obvious fracture of a limb.
- Nonweight-bearing lameness persisting for more than 12 hours.
- Swollen, painful joints or a gait that appears as if the dog is "walking on eggshells".
- Paralysis of one or more limbs.
- Lameness that initially improves but does not resolve in 24 - 48 hours.

### Other Emergencies

- Trauma.
- Venomous snakebite.
- Choking.

# Is It an Emergency?

Sign	What to Do
Vomiting or diarrhea (once or twice)	Remove all food. Give dog only water or ice cubes for hydration. If it doesn't resolve in 24 hours, call the veterinarian.
Vomiting or diarrhea (24 hours or more)	Check for dehydration: sticky mucous membranes, dull eyes. Call veterinarian.
Suspected bloat (large breeds)	Call veterinarian for immediate visit.
Suspected poisoning	Call veterinarian for immediate visit, call local poison control, or call ASPCA National Animal Poison Control Center: 1-888-4ANIHHELP or 1-800-548-2423. The \$30 fee will be charged to your credit card. You can charge the call to your phone bill by calling 1-900-680-0000.
Bleeding: Nose, paw, pad, not excessive Wrist or gushing	Apply pressure to stop bleeding. Call veterinarian for immediate visit.
Lameness	Call veterinarian if not resolved in 24 hours.
Suspected broken bone	Call veterinarian for immediate visit.
Trauma: auto accident, dog bite, falls	Call veterinarian for immediate visit
Choking	Immediate first aid to remove object
Seizures	Call veterinarian for immediate visit unless dog is a known epileptic.
Rubbing eyes, swollen eyes	Call veterinarian for immediate visit.

1999 Torstar Publications, Inc.