

# Dr. Karen Becker's First Aid Kit for Pets (click title for complete article)

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## **Getting Started: A Clear Plastic Container and an Emergency Phone List**

It's a good idea to keep the contents of your pet's first aid kit in a clear plastic container so that one quick glance will tell you you've found what you're looking for. A very inexpensive solution is a good-sized plastic zipper bag big enough to hold the supplies listed below, including a bath size cotton towel.

The first thing you'll need for your kit is an emergency telephone list with the following information:

- The phone number and address of your pet's veterinarian.
- The phone number and address (and directions, if necessary) to the closest emergency animal hospital.
- The phone number of your local animal ambulance or transportation service, if one is available.
- The Animal Poison Control hotline at 1-888-426-4435.

You can either tape the list to the outside of the kit, or place it inside, positioned where you can read it without even having to open the kit.

## **Recommended Supplies for Your Pet's First Aid Kit**

A **muzzle** the right size for your pet. It may seem cruel to place a muzzle on a sick or injured pet, but it's important to protect the humans handling and caring for the animal. The most docile, gentle pets in the world can become snappish out of fear or due to pain.

A **collar or harness and leash**.

A pair of **tweezers** for splinter or tick removal.

A **nail trimmer** or clipper.

A pair of **blunt-tipped scissors** to trim hair away from a wound, or to clip out foreign material caught in your pet's fur.

**Pre-soaked povidone iodine (Betadine) pads** to clean out cuts, wounds or abrasions, and **bottled water**. The wound should be flushed with water after using the pre-soaked pads.

**Saline solution**. Regular human contact lens saline drops can be used to flush out dirt, sand or other irritants from your pet's eye. It can also be used to flush away debris from a cut or scrape.

**Triple antibiotic ointment** to apply to a wound after it has been cleaned with povidone iodine and flushed with water.

**Sterile water-soluble lubricating jelly.** You can apply water-soluble lubricating jelly around your pet's eyes if you need to use soap or povidone iodine to clean a wound close to the eyes.

**Sterile non-stick pads** to cover a wound before bandaging.

Bandage material, either **elastic bandages or gauze** to hold a non-stick pad in place over a wound.

**Hydrogen peroxide 3%** to [induce vomiting](#), but only if your vet or the Animal Poison Control hotline instructs you to do so. Always call your vet or the hotline if you believe your dog or cat may have ingested a toxic substance. Hydrogen peroxide should not be used to clean a wound, as it is known to actually slow the healing process.

A **clean cotton towel** that can serve multiple purposes, from a pressure bandage, to a blanket, to a sling to lift a larger pet that isn't able to walk.

A **flashlight**. Sometimes a bright light source can help you more readily identify that thorn in your pet's paw or the tiny tick in between her toes.

## **Other Items You Might Want to Include:**

- Cotton balls and swabs
- Ear cleanser
- Benadryl for hypersensitivity reactions
- Bach Rescue Remedy for stress
- Homeopathic Aconitum for shock
- Styptic/clotting powder to stop bleeding from broken toenails
- A thermometer

If you'd prefer not to make your own kit, you can also buy a [ready-made pet first aid kit](#).

Make sure to keep your kit in an easily accessible location and let everyone in the family know where it is. If you're traveling with your pet, it's a good idea to either bring the kit along, or prepare a second kit for the car.

Remember that administering first aid to a sick or injured pet is just the first step in handling the emergency. Always seek immediate veterinary care as soon as possible to give your pet the best chance for a full recovery.