

Dog First Aid: Emergency Care for Pet Owners

Learn life-saving skills to handle common dog emergencies confidently. Perfect for pet owners, walkers, and sitters.

Dog Training Instructor: Rachel Townsend • 5 sections • 49 lessons • 14.50h total

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About this course

When your dog gets hurt or suddenly falls ill, those first few minutes matter. Many pet owners freeze up because they don't know what to do. A cut that won't stop bleeding, choking on a toy, limping after a fall. These situations happen fast, and waiting for a vet appointment isn't always an option. This course gives you the practical skills to act confidently when your dog needs help right away.

You'll work through real emergency scenarios step by step. We cover everything from building a proper first aid kit to performing CPR, treating wounds, handling poisoning incidents, and recognizing when your dog needs immediate veterinary care. Each lesson includes clear demonstrations, printable reference guides, and decision-making frameworks so you can stay calm and take the right action. By the end, you'll have a complete emergency response plan tailored to your dog.

Course curriculum

Foundations of Canine Emergency Care

- **Why Dog First Aid Skills Matter for Every Owner (12m)**
Understanding the gap between an emergency happening and reaching a vet. What these skills can and cannot do.
- **Reading Your Dog's Vital Signs (22m)**
Step-by-step guide to checking heart rate, respiratory rate, gum color, temperature, and capillary refill time.
- **Building Your Dog First Aid Kit (18m)**
Every item you need, where to buy them, and how to organize everything so you can find it fast.
- **The Emergency Assessment Framework: DR ABC (20m)**
A simple decision sequence for any dog emergency. Danger, Response, Airway, Breathing, Circulation.
- **When to Treat at Home vs. Rush to the Vet (15m)**
Clear guidelines for triage decisions. Red flags that always mean immediate vet care.
- **Handling an Injured or Panicked Dog Safely (18m)**
Muzzle techniques, restraint methods, and how to protect yourself while helping a scared or painful dog.
- **Your Dog's Normal: Creating a Health Baseline (14m)**
How to document your dog's normal behavior, appetite, and physical stats so changes are obvious early.
- **Emergency Preparedness: Plans Before Crisis Hits (16m)**
Setting up vet emergency contacts, knowing your nearest 24-hour clinic, and preparing a grab-and-go folder.

Core Emergency Skills

- **Dog CPR: Step-by-Step Chest Compressions and Rescue Breaths (28m)**
Full demonstration of canine CPR technique for different dog sizes. Includes hand placement and rhythm guidance.
- **Choking: How to Clear a Blocked Airway (18m)**
Identifying choking signs, the Heimlich maneuver for dogs, and what to do if the object won't come out.
- **Controlling External Bleeding (22m)**
Direct pressure, pressure bandages, and tourniquet use for severe limb bleeding. Real wound scenarios.
- **Cleaning and Dressing Wounds at Home (20m)**
Proper wound irrigation, antiseptic choices, bandaging techniques, and signs of infection to watch for.
- **Recognizing and Responding to Heat Stroke (16m)**
Early warning signs, rapid cooling methods, and the critical temperature threshold for emergency action.

- **Hypothermia and Cold Weather Emergencies (14m)**
How dogs lose body heat, rewarming techniques, and protecting vulnerable breeds in winter conditions.
- **Poisoning: Common Toxins and Immediate Response (25m)**
Household chemicals, foods, plants, and medications that poison dogs. What to do before reaching the vet.
- **Seizures: What to Do and What Not to Do (18m)**
Safe seizure response, timing the episode, creating a safe space, and when it becomes a true emergency.
- **Allergic Reactions and Anaphylaxis in Dogs (16m)**
Spotting hives, facial swelling, and breathing difficulty. Antihistamine dosing and emergency response.
- **Bloat: Recognizing Gastric Dilatation-Volvulus (20m)**
Why this is a race against time. Distended abdomen, unproductive retching, and immediate vet transport.

Injury-Specific Treatment

- **Broken Bones and Fractures: Stabilizing for Transport (22m)**
Splinting basics, improvised supports, and how to move a dog with a suspected fracture safely.
- **Eye Injuries and Emergencies (16m)**
Foreign objects, chemical splashes, scratches, and prolapsed eyes. Flushing techniques and protection methods.
- **Ear Injuries and Bleeding (14m)**
Ear flap wounds bleed heavily. Pressure bandaging techniques specific to dog ears.
- **Burns and Scalds: First Response (18m)**
Cooling protocols, covering burns, and distinguishing superficial from deep burns in fur-covered skin.
- **Paw and Nail Injuries (15m)**
Torn nails, cut paw pads, foreign objects between toes, and proper bandaging for a paw that dogs constantly lick.
- **Tail Injuries and Limber Tail Syndrome (12m)**
Common tail trauma, wagging injuries, and when a limp tail signals something more serious.
- **Dog Bites and Fight Wounds (20m)**
Assessing bite damage, puncture wounds vs. lacerations, infection risk, and when antibiotics are needed.
- **Tick Bites and Embedded Ticks (14m)**
Safe tick removal, saving the tick for identification, and disease symptoms to monitor over the following weeks.

Scenario-Based Emergency Response

- **Hit by a Car: Immediate Steps (24m)**
Internal injury signs, spinal precautions, safe loading onto a stretcher, and what to tell the emergency vet.

- **Near-Drowning and Water Rescue (18m)**
Clearing water from lungs, post-rescue monitoring, and secondary drowning risks in dogs.
- **Snake Bites: Identification and Response (22m)**
Venomous vs. non-venomous signs, what to do and what to avoid, and timing your vet trip.
- **Insect Stings and Spider Bites (16m)**
Removing stingers, monitoring for delayed reactions, and managing localized swelling.
- **Electrical Shock Injuries (14m)**
Chewed cords, outdoor hazards, safe disconnection, and hidden internal damage from electrical current.
- **Drowning Hazards: Pools, Lakes, and Floods (15m)**
Prevention strategies and rescue techniques. Teaching dogs pool exit points and supervising water play.
- **Falls from Height: Balconies, Trucks, and Stairs (16m)**
Assessing impact injuries, spinal stabilization, and monitoring for delayed internal bleeding.
- **Emergency C-Section Scenarios (20m)**
Recognizing dystocia, keeping the mother stable, and stimulating newborn puppies if delivery stalls.
- **Medication Overdose and Wrong Dose Accidents (18m)**
Human medications dogs commonly eat, calculating overdose severity, and inducing vomiting safely when appropriate.
- **Prolonged Vomiting or Diarrhea: When It Becomes Critical (15m)**
Dehydration assessment, electrolyte concerns, and at-home supportive care while arranging vet access.
- **Difficult Breathing: Emergency Airway Support (22m)**
Distinguishing respiratory distress causes, positioning for comfort, and oxygen availability at vet clinics.

Building Long-Term Preparedness

- **Breed-Specific Vulnerabilities You Should Know (20m)**
Brachycephalic breeds, deep-chested dogs, giant breeds, and small dogs each face different risks.
- **Puppy vs. Senior Dog: Age-Related Emergencies (18m)**
Hypoglycemia in puppies, mobility falls in seniors, and how response differs by life stage.
- **Outdoor Adventure Safety: Hiking, Camping, and Travel (22m)**
Trail hazards, wildlife encounters, heat management, and carrying first aid supplies on the go.
- **Home Safety Audit: Removing Hidden Dangers (16m)**
Room-by-room walkthrough of common household risks. Kitchen, garage, garden, and bathroom hazards.
- **Seasonal Hazards: Spring Through Winter (18m)**
Toxic spring plants, summer heat management, autumn mushroom risks, and winter antifreeze exposure.
- **Multi-Dog Household: Managing Emergencies with Multiple Pets (14m)**
Separating injured dogs from healthy ones, preventing pack interference during treatment.
- **Practicing Emergency Drills with Your Dog (15m)**
Desensitizing your dog to handling, practicing bandaging, and running through scenarios at home.

- **Mental First Aid: Managing Your Own Stress in Emergencies (16m)**
Staying focused when adrenaline spikes. Breathing techniques and decision-making under pressure.
- **Working with Your Vet: Building a Partnership (14m)**
What information to bring to emergency visits, how to describe symptoms clearly, and follow-up care planning.
- **Pet Insurance and Emergency Fund Planning (18m)**
Understanding coverage options, estimating emergency vet costs, and setting aside funds for unexpected care.
- **Organizing Medical Records for Quick Access (12m)**
Digital and physical record systems, vaccination history, medication lists, and sharing with pet sitters.
- **Your Complete Emergency Response Plan: Putting It All Together (25m)**
Building a personalized action plan covering your dog's specific risks, contacts, supplies, and practice schedule.

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