

Injured Pets: Safe Emergency Transport

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Your pet is injured and you need to get him to your veterinarian right away. Years of talking stressed owners through emergencies and helping to transport injured pets ourselves have taught us the best way to get your pet help without further damage.

Call your veterinarian or emergency clinic first to let them know you are coming. After hours, most veterinarians have an emergency number to call on their clinic message. Let them know, as well as you can, what is going on with your pet. This way they can have things ready and be able to help your pet when you get there. Make sure you know or have directions to the clinic. Ask a friend or neighbor to drive – the pet owner is almost always too upset to drive.

Protect Yourself

Before you try to move your pet, make sure you are protected. A pet in pain is more likely to lash out, bite, and scratch, even if he has never done this before. Fashion a muzzle out of gauze, a belt, or tie, or have a [muzzle](#) on hand. Do not muzzle an unconscious pet, a pet having trouble breathing, or one who cannot be supervised at all times. You may want a friend to hold your pet's head while you move him, or put an object between your hand and the pet's mouth.

Minimize Pet Movement

Move the pet as little, and as gently, as you can. Encourage your pet to lie down, preferably on his side. If he does not want to lie on his side, this may indicate an injury to his chest, so let him lie down any way he is comfortable.

If your pet has uncontrolled bleeding, apply pressure to the site of the injury with a clean cloth. If your pet is having difficulty breathing or has been vomiting, do not put any pressure on the stomach.

Is Your Pet Immobile?

If your pet cannot get up, treat it as a spinal injury and firmly immobilize him to a board (such as an ironing board or shelf). Slide him gently onto the board, trying to keep his spine straight. Affix him to the board with a belt, gauze, or rope.

If you think a limb is broken, support the whole leg. Do not try to move exposed bones back into place. Instead, cover the break in clean bandaging, such as a clean shirt or towel. Wrap any break loosely in a towel or shirt to restrict movement.

If your pet is small enough, use a sturdy carrier, like the [Compass Kennel](#). Cover your pet with a blanket to help fight shock. This may also serve to calm the pet.