



Navarro Small Animal Clinic

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Emergencies

By: Dr. Shana Bohac

It never fails that our pet gets sick after your veterinarian's normal business hours. Have your veterinarian's phone number readily available for these situations. It would also be useful to know your clinic's emergency protocol.

The best thing you can do for your pet is stay calm. If you think your pet needs medical attention you should call your veterinary office rather it is during or after office hours. Usually, if you call after hours, you will be directed to a different phone number or patched to who can help you. The city of Victoria and surrounding counties has an association for local veterinarians called the Golden Crescent Veterinary Medical Association. A large portion of those veterinarians take turns being 'on call' for emergency cases on the weekend. So even if your normal veterinarian is not available to treat your pet, another local veterinarian is.

It is good to try and differentiate between a true emergency and just a problem. A true emergency does not necessarily have to be life threatening. An example of a non-life threatening emergency is a scratch to the eye. If an eye is left untreated for a couple of days, the eye can be lost or vision compromised. Obviously severe bleeding, shock, ingestion of foreign object/chemical, difficulty giving birth, severe facial swelling that may impede breathing, hit by car, snake/animal bites, etc. are all considered emergencies. If your pet has blue or very pale gums and rapid breathing your pet may be distressed and need medical attention. Difficulty standing and apparent paralysis can indicate some sort of trauma or brain injury. Loss of consciousness, seizures lasting longer than 2 minutes or consecutive seizures, and excessive bleeding (large open wound or you cannot count the drops of blood) are all signs that your pet needs immediate medical attention. Male cats that are unable to urinate can lead to a large, painful bladder that could cause severe illness if not treated. Even though some of these might not be severe and can be quickly treated or treated from home, you should probably still contact your veterinarian for advice.

Some problems you run into are not true emergencies. Even though you might need some advice, some things are better to wait until normal business hours. If you are having problems with sneezing, runny nose, itching, head shaking, mild limping, loose stools, frequent urination, or a dog that doesn't have a good appetite, those things can usually wait to be addressed on Monday. If you are not sure what leash/collar would be best for your dog, what shampoo to use, or heartworm preventative is best for your dog, you can call your vet during the week to get good advice on that. Just like in human medicine, taking a doctor's time for a non-emergency might post pone the availability of that doctor for someone who has a true emergency.

If you are not sure if you need medical attention or not; it is always better to be safe than sorry!