

# What to Put in Your Dog's First Aid Kit

By Anne McGuire © 1995

Assembling a canine first aid kit for home or travel use is fairly simple. In fact, its pretty easy to assemble a kit that will serve both human and canine members of your family!

Before reading further, know that I am NOT a veterinarian. The contents of my first aid kit were assembled using common sense and my experiences with my own dogs. Dosage information listed here comes from the Merck Manual or from my own veterinarian.

\*\*\*PLEASE consult your own vet about appropriate uses and doses before giving your dog any of these medications. Also be sure to become familiar with the side effects and Adverse Reactions before using any of these medications -- while they are considered fairly safe and are not prescription medications, there may be some dogs that will react badly to some of these drugs.\*\*\*

The first thing you need for a good first aid kit is a suitable container. We use a fishing tackle-type box. On the outside, with permanent marker, label the box "First Aid" on all sides -- in an emergency someone else might have to locate and use this kit. Tape to the inside of the box lid, a card with the following information:

- your name, address, phone#
- name & phone# of someone to contact, in an emergency, who will take care of
- your dogs if you are incapacitated
- your dog's names and any information about any medications they take, any allergies or significant medical conditions they have
- name & phone# of your vet

Also tape to the inside of the box lid, a card with a list of common medications, their general dosages, and the specific dose for the weights of your own dogs: For example:

- Benadryl 1-2mg per lb, every 8 hrs (65lb dog, 2-4 25mg tablets every 8 hrs)
- aspirin 5 mg per lb every 12 hrs (1 325mg tablet per 65lb dog per 12 hrs)
- hydrogen peroxide to induce vomiting: 1-3 tsp every 10 min until dog vomits
- Pepto Bismol 1 tsp per 5lb per 6 hours (3-4 TBSP per 65 lb dog per 6 hrs)
- Kaopectate 1 ml per 1 lb per 2 hours (3-4 TBSP per 65 lb dog, 2 hrs)
- Imodium 1 mg per 15 lbs 1-2 times daily
- mineral oil (as a laxative) 5-30 ml per day..do not use long-term

(NOTE: my dogs both weigh about 65 lb. YOURS may differ. List the actual doses needed for your OWN dog's weights. This way they are quickly and easily available and you don't have to be searching for a calculator or trying to recall from memory when your dog needs medication.)

NEVER EVER give Tylenol (toxic to liver) or ibuprofen (Nuprin, Motrin, Advil, etc.). Ibuprofen is very toxic and fatal to dogs at low doses. Only aspirin is safe for dogs, and buffered aspirin or ascriptin is preferred to minimize stomach upset.

Check with your vet to confirm dosages before using. If symptoms persist, consult your vet ASAP -- do NOT continue to try to treat at home, the problem might be more serious than you think!

Give liquid medications using an oral syringe tucked into the side of the dog's mouth, holding jaws closed (rather than poking straight down the throat and risking getting liquid into the lungs).

Its also a good idea to keep copies of your dog's vaccination records, including a copy of the Rabies Certificate, in the First Aid kit, or in a packet in your car. I keep packets with shot records, what heartworm preventative the dogs get and which day of the month it should be given, emergency contact information, and my vet's name and phone number, in EACH car, and in my dog show equipment bag. In addition the emergency contact and vet information are clearly posted on my refrigerator door at home where anyone who needs it can find the information. You never know when you may be incapacitated in an accident and your dogs may be in the hands of a complete stranger who will need this information.

## **THINGS TO PUT IN THE FIRST AID KIT**

- cotton gauze bandage wrap - 1.5 inch width, 3 inch width
- Vet Wrap -- 2 inch width, and 4 inch width (4 inch is sold for horses)
- Ace bandage
- first aid tape
- cotton gauze pads
- regular band aids
- cotton swabs or Q-tips
- Benadryl
- ascriptin (buffered aspirin)
- Pepto Bismol tablets
- New Skin liquid bandage (useful for patching abrasions on pads)
- iodine tablets (if you hike and camp in areas where the stream water may not be safe for consumption with out first treating with iodine or boiling)
- oral syringes (for administering liquid oral medicines, getting ear drying solution into ears, etc...very useful!)
- needle & thread
- safety pins in several sizes
- razor blade (paper wrapped for protection)
- matches
- tweezers
- hemostat (useful for pulling ticks, thorns, large splinters, etc)
- small blunt end scissors
- canine rectal thermometer (get one made specifically for dogs)
- antibiotic ointment (such as Bacitracin, Betadine, or others)

- Eye rinsing solution (simple mild eye wash)
- small bottle of 3% hydrogen peroxide
- small bottle of isopropyl alcohol (rubbing)
- alcohol or antiseptic wipes (in small individual packets)
- small jar of Vaseline
- specific medications YOUR dog may need (for allergies, seizures, etc.)

Also have the following around the house, and consider packing to take on out-of-town trips:

- Ottomax\* (ointment for ear infections)
- Chlorasone\* eye ointment (or a similar cortisone-antibiotic eye ointment)
- Gentocin\* topical spray
- hydrocortisone topical spray (such as Cortaid brand)
- ear cleaning solution (Nolvasan Otic, Epi-Otic, or your favorite)
- homemade ear drying solution (1 part rubbing alcohol, 1 part white vinegar, 2 parts water)
- otoscope (for examining ears)
- Epsom salts
- Hot spot remedy ingredients -- whatever your favorite hot spot remedy is, never leave home traveling with your Golden without everything you need to treat a hot spot.

Those supplies preceded by a \* must be obtained from a veterinarian. All other supplies can be purchased, over the counter, at most any drug store. Several dog supply catalogs offer a variety of medical and first aid supplies.

If your dog has severe allergies to bee stings or other things that might be commonly encountered in places you take your dog, consider asking your vet about stocking your first aid kit with medication that might be needed for that sort of special emergency. Likewise, trackers and field trainers may want to consult their vet about equipping their first aid kits with specific supplies to deal with snake bites.

Be sure to clearly LABEL all medications and supplies with their name and expiration date. Be sure to replace medications that may have exceeded their recommended expiration date. Go through your kit at least once a year, replacing expired medications, replenishing used supplies, etc. We do this right before going on vacation with the dogs, so we know the kit is up-dated and complete when we are traveling and away from close veterinary care.