



Dog Emergency Checklist

Complete this sheet while your dog is well. Keep a copy at home, share it with the person caring for your dog, and update it whenever health or contact details change.

Emergency: If your dog is collapsing, struggling to breathe, bleeding heavily, having repeated seizures, unable to stand, or may have been poisoned, contact a veterinarian immediately. Do not delay urgent care to complete this form.

1. Dog details

Dog's name

Breed or type

Age or date of birth

Sex

Current weight

Microchip number

Distinguishing features

Usual diet or food

2. Medical details

Medical conditions

Allergies or known reactions

Current medicines - include name, strength and schedule

3. Regular veterinary care

Regular veterinary clinic

Clinic phone

Veterinarian or contact person, if relevant

Contacts and transport plan

Confirm the details directly. Not every South African area has a 24-hour veterinary practice, so record realistic alternatives and travel routes.

4. Veterinary and emergency contacts

Regular veterinary clinic

After-hours or emergency vet

Alternative emergency clinic

Pet insurance provider or policy

Trusted emergency contact

Confirmed route, entrance or parking notes for emergency clinic

Clinic phone

Emergency phone

Alternative clinic phone

Insurance contact

Trusted contact phone

5. Transport checklist

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| ☐ Secure lead and well-fitted harness. | ☐ Relevant product or packaging, when safe. |
| ☐ Suitable carrier where appropriate. | ☐ Insurance or payment information. |
| ☐ Clean blanket or towel. | ☐ Charged phone and offline directions. |
| ☐ Medical and vaccination records. | ☐ Second adult or helper when available. |
| ☐ Current medicine list. | ☐ Clinic called ahead when this will not delay care. |

Handling caution: Pain, fear or confusion can change behaviour. Ask the clinic how to move the dog. Never let restraint or a muzzle interfere with breathing, and do not muzzle a vomiting dog or a dog with breathing difficulty or facial injury.

Transport and access notes

Usual driver or available helper

Carrier, blanket and records stored at

Dog-specific handling or lifting guidance from the veterinary team

Alternative route or travel notes

Know what should not wait

These signs do not identify a diagnosis. They are reasons to contact a veterinarian or emergency animal clinic immediately and follow professional transport instructions.

6. Urgent warning signs

Sign	Why it matters	Action
Collapse or inability to stand	A critical circulation, breathing, neurological, toxin or trauma problem may be involved.	Phone immediately and follow transport advice.
Trouble breathing; pale, blue or grey gums	Airway, oxygen delivery or circulation may be compromised.	Minimise stress and seek emergency care.
Repeated or unresolved seizures	Ongoing seizures can cause injury and need rapid assessment.	Keep the area safe, time the event and phone urgently.
Severe or uncontrolled bleeding	Significant blood loss can become life-threatening.	Seek immediate guidance; do not improvise a tourniquet.
Suspected poisoning	Effects can progress before signs appear; care depends on the substance.	Call at once; keep packaging if safe. Do not induce vomiting unless directed.
Severe heat illness	Distress, weakness, confusion, vomiting, seizures or collapse can be critical.	Phone immediately and follow current cooling and transport instructions.
Suspected snake bite	Venom can affect swelling, breathing, nerves, bleeding or circulation.	Keep the dog calm, limit movement and travel urgently.
Swollen abdomen and distress or unproductive retching	A rapidly progressive gastric emergency may be possible.	Do not wait for it to settle.
Serious trauma or repeated vomiting with weakness	Shock, internal injury, obstruction or dehydration may be possible.	Contact a vet urgently.

7. What to tell the veterinary team

- ☐ What happened or may have happened.
- ☐ When it happened or signs began.
- ☐ Symptoms and whether they are changing.
- ☐ Possible exposure or trauma.
- ☐ Product, package or label if relevant.
- ☐ Approximate amount only if known.
- ☐ Current medicines and conditions.
- ☐ Recent food, exercise or travel.
- ☐ Safe photo or video if already available.
- ☐ Location of outdoor exposure where relevant.

Emergency event notes

Time the event or symptoms began

Time the veterinary clinic was called

What happened and what changed

Possible product, plant, food, animal or environmental exposure

Prepare for transport, not home treatment

Keep supplies together and easy to reach. Their purpose is safer communication, handling and travel while professional veterinary care is arranged.

8. Conservative preparation kit

Item	Purpose	Caution
Clean towels and disposable gloves	Protect hands and help prepare for transport.	Do not delay urgent travel for cleaning.
Spare lead and suitable carrier	Secure movement from home or vehicle.	Use equipment that suits the dog and condition.
Flashlight and charging cable	Read labels and prepare during poor light or power interruption.	Avoid adding stress to the dog.
Sterile saline	General cleaning supply only when a vet advises its use.	It is not an antidote or treatment for serious injury.
Familiar, correctly fitted muzzle	Limited bite protection when safe and appropriate.	Never obstruct breathing; do not use with vomiting, breathing difficulty or facial injury.
Records and emergency contact sheet	Provide health history, medicines, numbers and directions.	Review after every change.

9. What not to do

- ☐ Do not give human medicine, leftover prescriptions or a guessed dose.
- ☐ Do not induce vomiting unless a veterinary professional specifically directs it.
- ☐ Do not delay urgent care to search online or collect every item.
- ☐ Do not force food, water or oral products into a distressed dog.
- ☐ Do not cut a snake-bite wound, suck venom, apply ice or use home antidotes.
- ☐ Do not apply an improvised tourniquet.
- ☐ Do not use restraint that risks injury or interferes with breathing.
- ☐ Do not assume brief improvement means a serious event has passed.

Use the phone call: The veterinary team can account for the substance, injury, airway, age, existing disease and medicine already in your dog's body. Follow their situation-specific directions.

Notes from your regular veterinarian

Dog-specific preparation or transport notes

Kit last checked

Records and medicine list last updated

Additional item approved or recommended by the regular veterinarian

Outdoor, travel and sitter preparation

Plan for local risks and for moments when the person caring for your dog is not the usual owner.

10. South African outdoor checks

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| ☐ Heat, shade, water and route conditions checked before outings. | ☐ Nearest suitable after-hours clinic confirmed before rural travel. |
| ☐ Dog kept under reliable control around bush, holes, rocks and wildlife. | ☐ Veterinary numbers and directions kept available offline. |
| ☐ Tick checks and veterinarian-guided prevention kept current. | ☐ Travel time, fuel and an alternative route considered. |
| ☐ Household, garden, bait, medicine and toxic-food access managed. | ☐ Dog checked after outings for weakness, pain, swelling, ticks or breathing change. |

A tick or one symptom does not diagnose biliary. Suspected snake bite, poisoning or severe heat illness needs urgent veterinary contact. Do not assume every town has a 24-hour veterinary service.

11. Pet-sitter, boarding and travel handover

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| ☐ Primary owner and backup contact details. | ☐ Limits of the sitter's treatment authority. |
| ☐ Written medication instructions from current labels. | ☐ Known fears, handling limits and escape risk. |
| ☐ Feeding routine and known reactions. | ☐ Location of carrier, kit, records and checklist. |
| ☐ Clinic choice and after-hours alternative. | ☐ Update plan after any veterinary visit. |
| ☐ Payment or insurance arrangements. | ☐ Records and medicine packed for travel. |

12. Review and handover record

Checklist last reviewed

Next planned review

Copies stored at

People who have received the current copy

Travel or boarding details

Destination, boarding facility or sitter

Travel dates

Confirmed veterinary option near the destination

Keep the plan usable

Print one copy for the home and another for a sitter or family member. Save essential contacts and directions offline. Review medicine, weight, clinic availability and insurance details before every boarding stay or long trip.