

CPR for Your Pet

Your veterinarian or an urgent care clinic is best equipped to care for your pet in an emergency, and you should always attempt to obtain professional care for your pet before attempting to render care yourself. However, in the event of a serious emergency, it may be necessary for you to provide first aid to your pet, including rescue breathing or CPR.

Signs of Cardiac Arrest

- No spontaneous breathing
- No heartbeat or pulse
- Grey-colored mucous membranes
- Dilated pupils that are not responsive to light

If there is no pulse, give CPR.

Continue CPR for up to 15-20 minutes, preferably while transporting your pet to professional emergency care, or while waiting for such care.

Is the Animal Breathing? Do I Perform Rescue Breathing or CPR?

1. Make sure the animal is actually unconscious. Attempt to awaken the pet by talking softly and touching it gently. You can be seriously injured if you attempt to give CPR to a pet who was only sleeping heavily.
2. Open the airway by tilting the neck and head slightly back. Carefully pull the tongue between the front teeth. Sweep the mouth with your finger (only if you are sure the pet is unconscious).
3. Check for breathing. Look, listen, and feel for air. Watch for the rise and fall of the chest.
4. If the pet is not breathing, close its mouth and hold it closed, place your mouth over the animal's nose, and blow forcefully. Give 4 or 5 quick breaths, then check for a pulse. This is rescue breathing.
5. If the animal has a pulse, give rescue breathing, not CPR. If the animal has no pulse, give CPR.

Rescue Breathing Rates

- Cat or small dog (< 30 lbs.): 20-30 breaths per minute, or a breath every 2 to 3 seconds
- Medium or large dog (> 30 lbs.): 20 breaths per minute, or a breath every 3 seconds

CPR for a Cat or Small Dog (< 30 lbs.)

1. Lay the animal on its right side and kneel next to the pet with its chest facing you.
2. Place the palm of one hand over the ribs at the point where the elbow touches the chest and place the other hand beneath the right side of the body.
3. Compress the chest 1/2 to 1 inch.
4. If you are alone, give 5 compressions (at a rate of 80-100 per minute) to 1 breath of air.
5. If someone is with you, have one person give compressions at a rate of 3 compressions to 1 breath of air from the other person. Stop and check for a pulse. Continue CPR as needed up to 20 minutes.

CPR for a Medium to Large Dog (30 - 90 lbs.)

1. Place the animal on its left side and kneel next to the pet with its back facing you.
2. Place your hands (one on top of the other) on the animal at the point where the left elbow of the front leg lies when pulled back to the chest.
3. Compress the chest 1 to 3 inches.
4. If you are alone, give 5 compressions (at a rate of 80-100 per minute) to 1 breath of air.
5. If someone is with you, have one person give compressions at a rate of 2-3 compressions to 1 breath of air from the other person. Stop and check for a pulse. Continue CPR as needed up to 20 minutes.

CPR for a Giant Dog (> 90 lbs.)

1. Place the animal on its left side and kneel next to the pet with its back facing you.
2. Place your hands (one on top of the other) on the animal at the point where the left elbow of the front leg lies when pulled back to the chest.
3. Compress the chest 1 to 3 inches.
4. If you are alone, give 10 compressions (at a rate of 80-100 per minute) to 1 breath of air.
5. If someone is with you, have one person give compressions at a rate of 6 compressions to 1 breath of air from the other person. Stop and check for a pulse. Continue CPR as needed up to 20 minutes.



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