

## **HARLEY'S HOPE FOUNDATION PET CARE & SAFETY INFO**

*An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.  
Benjamin Franklin*

While some conditions are due to genetic predisposition, many common ailments and injuries are preventable. The information on the following pages has been compiled from a variety of sources and is by no means a substitute for professional care. It is, however, intended to inform and assist you in keeping your pets safe and healthy. If you have additional articles or information to share, please email us at [info@harleys-hopefoundation.org](mailto:info@harleys-hopefoundation.org).

### **Top Tips for Keeping Your Pet Healthy:**

1. Feed your pet, regardless of species, high quality food for maximum nutrition and optimal weight. Don't overfeed or allow pets to "pig" out. Certain breeds of dogs are susceptible to a condition known as twisted stomach, often brought on by overeating, then consuming large quantities of water causing bloat (see Canine Breed Specific Ailments on page 7).
2. Keep those regular veterinary check-ups. Just as humans need to have routine tests to ensure good health, so do pets. In addition to regular vaccinations, pets also need dental care, de-worming, and depending upon where you live - heartworm medication.
3. Keep your pets at home. Free-roaming dogs and cats are at risk from a variety of threats including cars, predators, disease, toxins, and other hazards. Contrary to popular belief, cats do not need to be outside in order to be happy. Provide them with a place sit beside a sunny window, and offer them cat grass suitable for munching. Spaying or neutering pets at an early age may help curb the desire to roam, and will definitely help prevent shredded screens and curtains from cats in heat.
4. Regular exercise is another thing humans have in common with their pets. While dogs may be easier to take on walks, toss the Frisbee or ball to, cats should be encouraged to climb cat trees, chase crinkle balls or other appropriate cat dogs. Small caged pets also need access to wheels, tunnels, and adequate space to move around in.
5. Early spay/neuter can help prolong your pet's life in addition to preventing unwanted litters. Approximately 5 million cats, dogs, and small pets are euthanized every year in shelters through the U.S. because no one wants them. Do your part to end this unnecessary carnage by altering your pet. Spaying or

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neutering your pet can eliminate or reduce the risk of uterine cancer, testicular cancer, and a nasty, often fatal condition called pyometra.

6. Mind the weather! Just as you require protection against the elements, so does your pet. Dogs may enjoy frolicking in the snow, but can suffer from frostbite on their paws. Don't leave your dog outside in the cold! He or she is a member of the family and belongs inside, toasty warm like the rest of you.
7. Research shows that humans and pets alike benefit from companionship and love. A little friendship can help defeat depression and improve the immune systems of pets and humans alike, and lower blood pressure as well. Don't take your commitment to your pet lightly. Severing the human-animal bond for whatever reason can have profound, negative effects on both animal and human. Adoption of a pet should be a lifelong commitment!

### **Cancer:**

Since we lost Harley to cancer - hemangiosarcoma - this seems the logical place to begin talking about specific health issues. The startling fact is one in four dogs will die from cancer. While all breeds can develop cancer, the breeds listed below are more susceptible to certain types of cancers according to the Morris Animal Foundation.

Bernese Mountain Dog:	Histiocytic sarcoma (soft tissue cancer)
Boxer:	Lymphoma and brain cancer
Chow Chow:	Stomach cancer
Cocker Spaniel:	Lymphoma
Collie:	Nasal cancer
English Springer Spaniel:	Mammary gland cancer
Flat-Coated Retriever:	Bladder cancer and skin/mouth melanoma
Golden Retriever:	Lymphoma and hemangiosarcoma
Greyhound:	Osteosarcoma (bone)
Labrador Retriever:	Lymphoma and hemangiosarcoma
Pug:	Mast cell cancer (skin cancer)
Rottweiler:	Osteosarcoma
Scottish Terrier:	Bladder cancer and skin/mouth melanoma
Shar-Pei:	Mast cell cancer

Because some cancers, such as hemangiosarcoma, do not show symptoms until the disease has progressed, it is important to follow-through on annual veterinary check-ups. You are the best judge of what is or is not "normal" behavior for your pet. If you suspect something is wrong, ask your veterinarian to run additional tests.

Cancer affects cats and other domesticated animals as well, and while much has been written about canine cancer, cancer in felines is on the rise. The most common types of cancer affecting cats are lymphosarcoma, cancer affecting the lymphoid tissue in virtually

any of the organs, squamous cell carcinoma, or skin cancer, and mammary tumors. Early spaying of female cats and dogs can greatly lessen the risk of mammary tumors later in life.

Once cancer has been diagnosed, the most common treatment options are surgery, radiation, and chemotherapy. While cancer may offer the best chance of a cure, it is not an option if the cancer has already metastasized. Early detection and treatment are the best weapons in the fight against veterinary cancer.

According to the Veterinary Cancer Society, cancer warning signs may include:

- persistent abnormal swelling
- sores that won't heal
- loss of weight
- loss of appetite
- bleeding or discharge from any body opening
- offensive odor
- difficulty eating or swallowing
- loss of stamina - reluctance to exercise
- persistent lameness or stiffness
- difficulty breathing, urinating, or defecating

For additional information on animal cancer and the fight to end it, visit the Morris Animal Foundation at [www.MorrisAnimalFoundation.org](http://www.MorrisAnimalFoundation.org), and Blue Buffalo Pet Cancer Awareness, [www.petcancerawareness.org](http://www.petcancerawareness.org).

### **First Aid:**

Just as you would keep a first aid kit available at home and in your car, you should have a first aid kit for pets, too. Pre-made pet first aid kits are available to purchase on the Internet and at some pet care stores, or you can assemble your own following the guidelines below provided by Petfinder.com.

- Sterile Gauze pads (3"x3" and 2"x2") and gauze bandage rolls (1" and 2")
- First aid adhesive tape, 1" roll
- Cotton swabs
- Tweezers
- Scissors
- Plastic freezer/sandwich bags
- Small bottle of 3% hydrogen peroxide
- Styptic pencil or cornstarch (stems blood flow from minor cuts)
- Antibacterial ointment
- Kaopectate or Pepto-Bismol
- A current pet first aid book

- Eyewash
- Eyedropper
- Mineral oil (a lubricant and laxative when given by mouth)
- Digital or rectal thermometer in plastic case
- Heavy work gloves to protect against bites
- Latex gloves
- Leash\*
- Thin rope
- Splint materials (tongue depressor, 12-inch wooden ruler or thick magazine)

Place all contents in a waterproof, plastic storage box, tackle box, or coffee can with snug lid. Make sure you also have a safe way to transport your animal to the veterinarian or during an evacuation - cat carrier, dog crate, horse trailer, etc. - and that these items are kept in a convenient place. You do not want to be climbing around in the attic looking for the cat carrier when precious moments count!

\* You may also want to consider adding an extra collar and soft muzzle.

### **Household Medications that are Safe for Pets:**

**Buffered aspirin** may be used for pain relief and as an anti-inflammatory in dogs. Administer 5 mg per lb. every 12 hours with food. A low dose may be used in cats once every 3 days for a few doses if needed.

**Vitamin B** may be used as an appetite stimulant in both cats and dogs. For dogs administer 1/2 to 2 ml. subcutaneously every 24 hours. For cats, administer 1/2 to 1 ml. subcutaneously every 24 hours.

**Benadryl** may be used for allergies and skin itching. For dogs or cats, administer 1/2 mg. per lb. every 8 hours for a maximum dose of 2 mg. per lb.

**Dramamine** may be used to treat motion sickness for traveling pets. For dogs use up to 50 mg. every 8 hours. For cats use up to 10 mg. every 8 hours.

**Hydrogen Peroxide 3%** is used in the same manner as syrup of ipecac - use to induce vomiting after accidental poisoning. For dogs and cats administer 10 ml. by mouth every 15 minutes. \*Vomiting may not be indicated for certain types of accidental poisonings.

**Epinephrine 1:1000** is used in the same manner used in humans - to counter allergic reactions to medications, insect bites, and bee stings. It must be administered via intramuscular or subcutaneous injection - 1/10 to 1/2 ml.

**Pepto Bismol** can be given for nausea and diarrhea. In fact when Harley was undergoing chemotherapy, Pepto Bismol worked better than the expensive prescription drugs in quelling her nausea. For dogs give 1 tsp. per 5 lbs. of body weight every 6 hours. Not recommended for use by cats.

**DiGel Liquid** can be used as an antacid or anti-gas medication. For dogs give up to 4 tbsp. every 8 hours. Cats may take up to 2 tbsp. every 8 hours.

**Mineral Oil** can be used to relieve constipation in both dogs and cats. For canines give up to 4 tbsps. daily. Cats make take up to 2 tbsp. daily, although the oil from canned tuna can also be effective for constipation.

**Kaopectate** is used to relieve diarrhea in dogs. Give 1 ml. per 1 lb. of body weight every 2 hours. Due to new formula containing salicylates, OTC Kaopectate is not recommended for cats. Your veterinarian can provide a similar product called Kaolin Pectin Suspension, which is safe for cats.

For additional information, visit [www.diamondpaws.com/health/drugs.htm](http://www.diamondpaws.com/health/drugs.htm).

### **Household Medications NOT SAFE FOR PETS:**

The following drugs can cause serious illness or death in your pet.

Paracetamol  
Ibuprofen  
Acetaminophen (Tylenol and all store brand versions of Tylenol)  
Alcohol - all kinds  
Benzocaine  
Phenolphthalein (laxative)  
Iron vitamin supplements  
Vitamin D supplements  
Asthma medications  
Drugs to control seizures  
Coffee and tea (caffeine is not good for pets)  
Cannabis or any illegal drugs

**When in doubt, do not administer the drug or medication to your pets. Call your veterinarian or an emergency veterinary clinic for after-hours questions.**

### **Human Foods SAFE for Pets:**

Melons - watermelon, cantaloupe and honeydew  
Shelled sunflower seeds  
Peanut butter

Berries - fresh or frozen - blueberries, blackberries, strawberries, huckleberries,  
raspberries  
Cooked chicken\*  
Scrambled eggs  
Hamburger\*  
Carrots (dogs, horses - monitor for possible choking hazard)  
Pasta  
Oatmeal  
Rice  
Cheese  
Bananas (safe for dogs)  
Apple slices (safe for dogs and cats)  
Green beans

\*\*Avoid using onion or garlic as seasoning

### **Human Foods UNSAFE for Pets:**

Raisins (highly toxic)  
Grapes (highly toxic)  
Chocolate (highly toxic)  
Bones from fish or poultry (choking hazard)  
Alcoholic beverages  
Apple seeds (toxic)  
Avocadoes  
Apricot pits (choking hazard)  
Cherry pits (choking hazard)  
Candy containing Xylitol - found in sugar-free candy and food products  
Coffee including grounds or beans  
Hops  
Macadamia nuts  
Moldy foods  
Mushrooms  
Mustard seed  
Onions and onion powder (cats more sensitive)  
Garlic (in large quantities - cats more sensitive)  
Peach pits (choking hazard)  
Potato leaves and stems (green part of the potato)  
Rhubarb leaves  
Salt (in large quantities)  
Tea  
Tomato leaves and stems (green parts)  
Walnuts  
Yeast dough  
Tobacco

Citrus oils  
Raw eggs (may contain Salmonella)  
Raw meat (may contain Salmonella and E. Coli)  
Persimmons  
Nutmeg  
Dried beans (toxic to birds)

For additional information on foods to avoid, visit [www.peteducation.com](http://www.peteducation.com).

### **Common Household Hazards:**

Drapery cords (choking hazard)  
Electrical cords (electrocution hazard)  
Venetian blinds (choking hazard)  
Unsecured heavy objects like TV's, bookcases, entertainment units - may fall and seriously injure or kill pets or small children  
Falling out of windows, off decks, porches, balconies  
Holiday decorations including Christmas trees (falling hazard), lights (choking hazard), tinsel or garland (choking and intestinal blockage hazard), ornaments (broken glass)  
Small children may inadvertently injure small pets through rough play - always supervise!  
Allowing cats to roam outside - exposure to disease, toxins, predators, motor vehicles  
Allow dogs to ride unrestrained in the back of trucks - serious injury or death from falling out  
Collar strangulation accidents in dogs and cats. Use break-away collars! Visit [www.keepsafecollar.com](http://www.keepsafecollar.com) for additional information.

### **Common Household Toxins:**

Human medications  
Insecticides  
Human food  
\*Plants  
Veterinary medications  
Rodenticides (rodent poison)  
Household cleaning products  
Exposure to heavy metals in paint chips, linoleum, etc.  
Garden products such as fertilizer  
Chemical hazards such as antifreeze, paint thinner, drain cleaner, pool/spa chemicals, etc.

\*For a complete listing of toxic plants, visit [www.aspca.org/pet-care/poison-control/plants/index.jsp?page=2](http://www.aspca.org/pet-care/poison-control/plants/index.jsp?page=2).

**\*\*When in doubt call the ASPCA 24 hour emergency poison hotline 1-888-426-4435 or your local emergency veterinary clinic.**

### **Canine Breed-Specific Ailments:**

It is a sad fact of life that certain breeds of pets are more susceptible to health problems than others. Genetic abnormalities in some breeds can affect their health in a variety of ways. If you have a pet genetically predisposed to the following conditions, be sure to educate yourself to the warning signs and start saving up now in case your pet develops the condition and requires major veterinary care.

These ailments include, but are not limited to the following:

**Epilepsy** and seizures can affect any breed of dog if he/she has experienced major head trauma or has eaten something toxic. Breeds that suffer seizures as the result of genetic predisposition include beagles, dachshunds, and German shepherds.

**Gastric Dilation and Volvulus) or Bloat** is also known as twisted stomach. This is an extremely serious and life-threatening condition. Dogs can die within hours of bloat developing so it is imperative that you seek immediate veterinary care. When bloat occurs, the stomach fills with air, which then puts extreme pressure on the diaphragm and other organs. This makes it difficult for the dog to breathe. Large veins in the abdomen become compressed, preventing blood from getting to the heart. The stomach, when filled with air, can twist itself, cutting off its blood supply and causing the stomach tissue to die. Symptoms include abdominal distention, nonproductive vomiting, restlessness, pain, rapid shallow breathing, and profuse salivation. Shock and collapse may occur once the condition continues to deteriorate.

Breeds more susceptible to bloat are those with deep, narrow chests. These include the following breeds, ranked in order of greatest to lowest risk, Great Dane, Saint Bernard, Weimaraner, Irish Setter, Gordon Setter, Standard Poodle, Basset Hound, Doberman Pinscher, Old English Sheepdog, German Shorthaired Pointer, Newfoundland, German Shepherd, Airedale Terrier, Alaskan Malamute, Chesapeake Bay Retriever, Boxer, Collie, Labrador Retriever, English Springer Spaniel, Samoyed, Dachshund, Golden Retriever, Rottweiler, Mixed breeds, Miniature Poodles.

Other facts include age, gender, eating habits, and temperament. Dogs over 7 years are twice as likely to develop bloat than younger dogs. Males are twice as likely as females to develop bloat. Anxious or fearful dogs are thought to be at an increased risk of developing bloat. Dogs fed once a day are twice as likely to develop bloat as dogs fed twice or three times a day. Also, dogs that eat rapidly, drink a great deal of water or exercise soon after a meal, may also be at increased risk. In addition, dogs susceptible to bloat should be fed at floor level rather than with elevated feeders.

**Hip dysplasia** is often found in large breeds and can be quite painful for dogs. Breeds commonly affected by hip dysplasia include German shepherds, mastiffs, golden retrievers, Saint Bernards, Labrador retrievers, and Rottweilers. Some smaller breeds, specifically cocker spaniels and springer spaniel mixes, are also prone to developing this condition.

**Heart disease** can affect the length of life as well as the quality of life in the affected animal. Common forms of heart disease include mitral valve disease, often found in Cavalier King Charles spaniels, dilated cardiomyopathy, found in Dobermans, Boxers, and Great Danes, and aortic stenosis, which is a congenital heart disease often found in golden retrievers, German shepherds, bulldogs, boxers, and Rottweilers. Myocarditis, or inflammation of the heart muscle, occurs often in small breed dogs.

Additional heart problems include genetic heart defects which most often are found in beagles, bull terriers, bulldogs, boxers, Keeshonds, Great Danes, golden or Labrador retrievers, Dobermans, German shepherds, Pomeranians, Rottweilers, Cocker spaniels, Samoyeds, and German shorthaired pointers.

Symptoms of heart problems tend to be similar regardless of the causes. They include fatigue, frequent panting, fainting or collapsing, coughing, and discoloration of the gums and/or tongue. If you notice any of these symptoms in your pet, seek immediate veterinary care.

**Parvovirus** can affect any unvaccinated dogs as it is a highly contagious infection. However, certain breeds are at a higher risk of contracted the disease, possibly due to weakened immune systems. These breeds are American pit bull terriers, Dobermans, English springer spaniels, and Rottweilers. Symptoms include bloody diarrhea, and treatment should be sought immediately.

**Thyroid** disease or hypothyroidism tends to occur in older dogs and cats. Symptoms include bald patches that often occur on the same area on both sides of the body, fatigue, weight gain, and sensitivity to cold. If left untreated, the disease can cause skin lesions, develop into thyroid cancer, and cause a skin disease called pyoderma. Dog breeds most susceptible to hypothyroidism include Cocker spaniels, dachshunds, Dobermans, hounds, Irish setters, retrievers, Rottweilers, and Shetland sheepdogs.

### **Common Feline Ailments:**

**Feline Infectious Peritonitis (FIP)** is a virus that can remain dormant in a cat's intestines for many years. This lethal condition may take a 'wet' or 'dry' form. Cats who survive a bout of FIP may become carriers of the virus. Symptoms include sneezing, nasal discharge, watery eyes, diarrhea, and lethargy. This is a serious condition that requires immediate veterinary attention.

**Feline Immunodeficiency Virus (FIV)** is also known as feline AIDS, and affects the cat's immune system. Cats should be tested on a regular basis as there is no vaccine for this condition. Symptoms may not be readily apparent, and the virus' presence may come to light only after your cat becomes ill from conditions caused by the suppressed immune system. This virus can be transmitted from one cat to another via penetrating bite wounds.

**Feline Leukemia (FeLV)** is considered to be the most common fatal disease in cats and is transmitted from one cat to another via bodily fluids - a bite wound, grooming, sharing a water bowl, and in rare cases sharing a litter box. Mother cats can also transfer the disease thru nursing their kittens. A vaccine is available for this disease, but cats should be tested for FeLV even if they are currently the only cat in the household. If they get outside or allowed to roam outside, and are positive for FeLV, they can affect other cats and spread the disease. Symptoms include loss of appetite, weight loss, lethargy, poor coat condition, pale gums, persistent diarrhea, and seizures.

**Feline Panleukopenia (Distemper)** is an extremely contagious disease with a high mortality rate, which tends to targets kittens. Panleukopenia often occurs in large groups of unvaccinated cats, such as feral colonies. Symptoms include vomiting, diarrhea, depression, lack of appetite, lack of grooming, abdominal pain. Treatment is symptomatic with preventive care given to avoid secondary bacterial infections. The FPV vaccine is often administered as part of a 3-way vaccine and can be given to cats over 8 weeks of age. The vaccine should be readministered to adult cats every 1 to 3 years.

**Upper Respiratory Infections (URI's)** are usually viral in nature. Also known as the cat "flu", URI's are highly contagious and common in areas with large cat populations, such as rescues and shelters. URI's are airborne in transmission, so sick cats should be isolated from other cats during their treatment. Because germs may have spread prior to presentation of symptoms, it is not uncommon for URI's to spread from one cat to another within the same household. Symptoms include sneezing, coughing, runny nose, and watery eyes. Treatment may include the use of antibiotics to prevent secondary bacterial infections. Vaccines are available for URI's, but may be more effective at reducing the severity of the condition, rather than preventing it from occurring.

**Urinary tract infections (UTI's)** occur most often in unneutered male cats, but are found in female cats as well. Symptoms include a strong urine odor, the cat visiting the litter box frequently, but not producing odor, or the cat not using the litter box at all. This condition can be treated with antibiotics, but cats that suffer from repeat UTI's may require a special diet low in ash.

**Worms** are a common and stubborn issues for cats and can take the form of hookworms, tapeworms, roundworms, and heartworms. Cats should be seen by a veterinarian if they suffer from fleas or if you see white specks in their stool. Worms can be easily treated with medication, but can be fatal to your cat if left untreated.