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Basic tips for handling an injured pet

If your pet is injured, it could be in pain and is also most likely scared and confused. You need to be *careful* to avoid getting hurt, bitten or scratched.

- Never assume that even the gentlest pet will not bite or scratch if injured. Pain and fear can make animals unpredictable or even dangerous.
- Don't attempt to hug an injured pet, and always keep your face away from its mouth. Although this may be your first impulse to comfort your pet, it might only scare the animal more or cause them pain.
- Perform any examination slowly and gently. Stop if your animal becomes more agitated.
- Call your veterinarian or an emergency veterinary clinic before you move your pet so they can be ready for you when you arrive.
- If necessary *and* if your pet is not vomiting, place a muzzle on the pet to reduce the chances you'll be bitten.
 - Dogs may be muzzled with towels, stockings or gauze rolls.
 - Cats and other small animals may be wrapped in a towel to restrain them, but make sure your pet is not wrapped in the towel too tightly and its nose is uncovered so it can breathe.

NEVER muzzle your pet if it is vomiting.

- If possible, try to stabilize injuries before moving an injured animal by splinting or bandaging them.
- While transporting your injured pet, keep it confined in a small area to reduce the risk of additional injury. Pet carriers work well, or you can use a box or other container (but make sure your pet has enough air). For larger dogs, you can use a board, toboggan/sled, door, throw rug, blanket or something similar to act as a stretcher.
- You should always keep your pet's medical records in a safe, easily accessible place. Bring these with you when you take your dog for emergency treatment.

For more information on how to handle a pet before you take it to an emergency clinic, please visit [How to Help Emergency Vet Save Your Pet](#).

