

# Sierra Animal Wellness Center

Specializing in Holistic, Integrative Veterinary  
Medicine



April, 2017



## Clinic Hours

Monday, Thursday and Friday  
from 9:00 to 6:00

Tuesday from 9:00 to 3:00

Wednesday from 12:00 to 6:00

## Contact Us

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## Is This an Emergency?

Dogs and cats are masters at hiding symptoms of illness. This instinct would have helped them to survive in the wild.

If your animal friend is showing signs of weakness or pain, there's a good chance the symptoms are worse than he or she is letting on.

It can be difficult to determine what can be taken care of at home and what requires a trip to the vet. It's always best to err on the side of caution. If you are in doubt, take your pet in to be checked out.



Regular wellness visits will also help you and Dr. Peggy to know what's normal and what's not for your pet, as well as whether existing health conditions are worsening or improving.

For some medical issues, like mild diarrhea or a minor skin irritation, you can wait until the next day to see if it resolves itself. In other cases, waiting isn't an option, as it could put your pet's life at risk.

### Signs of an Emergency

This is not an all-inclusive list, but if you notice any of the following, call or get your pet to us or an emergency veterinary clinic immediately:

- Severe bleeding or bleeding that doesn't stop within five minutes
- Bleeding from nose, mouth, rectum, coughing up blood, or blood in urine
- Increased rate and/or effort in breathing, shallow or delayed breathing, gasping.
- Choking and gagging
- Wounds from dog or cat fights
- Bites from wildlife
- Changes to gum color (gums should be pink)
- Persistent or severe vomiting or diarrhea - more than two episodes in a 24-hour period, or either of these combined with obvious illness or any of the other problems listed here
- Convulsions, seizures
- Loss of balance, staggering
- Trembling or shaking
- Weakness
- Changes to alertness
- Distended or bloated belly. Symptoms of bloat which can be deadly, may include a very distended abdomen, unproductive belching, retching or vomiting, abdominal pain, restlessness, shallow, rapid breathing and pale gums
- Straining or inability to urinate or pass feces (stool), or obvious pain associated with urinating or passing stool
- Eye discomfort, severe itching, hives, facial swelling or Injuries to the eye(s)
- Difficulty or unusual delay delivering kittens or puppies
- Suspected exposure to or eating of poisons such as plants, human supplements or medications, antifreeze, xylitol, chocolate, rodent poison, insecticides, etc.

Symptoms of poisoning include vomiting, drooling, seizures or bleeding. [Click here](#) for a link to the ASPCA Toxic and Non-toxic Plants list. [Click here](#) for common pet health toxins.

- Fractured bones, severe lameness or inability to move leg(s)
- Obvious signs of pain or extreme anxiety
- Exposure to extreme temperatures. Heat stress or heatstroke
- Sudden deterioration in a chronic illness
- Refusal to drink for 24 hours or more
- Unconsciousness
- Penetrating wounds to the chest, including deep lacerations or punctures
- A fever over 104 degrees Fahrenheit (40 degrees Celsius) with profound lethargy
- Bulging eyes and sudden blindness
- Burns or injuries in which a bone is exposed

## First-Aid for Pet Emergencies



Do you know what to do if your pet chokes on a bone or has a seizure? Knowing some basic pet first-aid techniques could mean the difference between life and death.

Here are some common pet emergencies and what to do on the spot, before you head to the clinic:

**Hit by Car** - An animal in pain is more likely to bite. So muzzle it first with a scarf, belt, or towel, unless it's vomiting. Get the animal off the road by gently sliding it onto a towel or blanket (these should be in your car's first-aid kit). Make sure it's warm, as it may be in shock. If it seems to have any broken bones, roll up a magazine or newspaper to use as a splint. Use the corners of the towel or blanket to create a sling to gently lift the animal into your car for transport to the clinic or emergency animal clinic.

**Poisoned** - Many household items can be dangerous to dogs and cats - everything from antifreeze, insecticides, and aspirin to raisins and sugar-free gum. But don't panic. Many of these have antidotes. Call the Animal Poison Control hotline at 888-426-4435 or the Pet Poison Helpline at 800-213-6680 immediately. They can probably help you even before you get to the clinic. Have a credit card handy. They do charge so that they can continue to have a veterinarian available 24/7.

**Choking** - If the pet is unconscious, open its mouth and try to clear the object out with your fingers. If conscious, do a modified Heimlich maneuver. Get someone else to drive

to the vet so you can continue to do this on the way. Knowing how to respond before a choking emergency occurs can save your pet's life. Detailed step-by-step instructions for performing the Heimlich maneuver are included in this excellent article by Dr. Karen Becker. [Click here.](#)

**Seizures** - A seizure will generally pass on its own in less than 3 minutes. Your job is to make sure the animal is safe while it's happening. Get any movable furniture away from the pet. Don't put your hands or your face near the animal's mouth, and don't pull its tongue out of the mouth. Animals won't swallow their tongues during a seizure and you may end up with a serious bite wound. When the seizure is over, contact Dr. Peggy.

**Dog or Cat Bites** - If another animal bites your pet, get to the clinic as soon as possible. Dog and cat bites can pull a lot of hair and debris into the wound. If it's not flushed and cleaned out soon, it can become infected. Many puncture wounds end up being deeper than you can see on first inspection and may require sutures.

**Bee and Wasp Stings** - Bee and wasp stings usually cause just minor swelling and itching. If you can see the stinger, use a credit card to scrape it out, or pull it out with tweezers. An antihistamine like Benadryl will relieve some of the symptoms, but call our office to ask how much to give. If you notice any swelling on the face or neck, or hives all over the body, get the animal to the clinic right away. This could be a severe anaphylactic reaction -- a definite emergency.

**Heatstroke** - If your animal is panting heavily, drooling, having trouble breathing, or showing other symptoms of heatstroke, move it to a shady area immediately. Put a cool, wet cloth around its neck and head (not its face). You can also gently wet the animal down with cool, not cold, water, especially the belly, before transporting it to the vet.

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## The Importance of Appropriately Trimmed Toenails in Dogs

Did you know that most musculoskeletal problems veterinarians treat in dogs and horses have their roots in chronic abnormal posture? One of the most important postural inputs for dogs is the relationship of the toenails to the feet and the ground. Keeping the toenails short is the single most important thing you can do to minimize your dog's risk of injury and lameness.



When a dog's toenails are too long, it throws their front legs too far back and shifts weight to the back legs inappropriately. This results in abnormal stress on the neck, mid

back, hips and knees. Years of abnormal posture can result in neck, back and hip pain and the possibility of rupturing a cruciate ligament in the knees. Another affect is difficulty rising from a laid down position and having the front legs slip forward in a sitting position. Arthritis in the front feet is also a common result of overgrown toenails.

Cut your dog's nails every two weeks, so they are off the floor when standing on level ground. If you can hear them on the kitchen floor, they are TOO LONG!!

How do you get long toenails short in a hurry? The sensitive "quick" is on the bottom of the nail. Make a shallow cut at an angle across the roof or top of the nail, then follow up with shallow cuts to take off the sides of the nail... Use sharp small clippers for good control, and a good light. The insensitive part of the nail is chalky and white, the sensitive part is translucent. You can strip away the surface, bit by bit, and leave the nub of the quick hanging out to dry. After trimming you can use a grinder like PediPaws or an Oster grinder to smooth off the rough edges. The nub of the quick will dry up and recede.

Your goal is toenails that do not touch the ground when standing, but also do not touch while walking on level ground. To shorten nails, cut once a week. To maintain the nail at the right length, trim or grind once every two weeks. Remember to make this quality by giving lots of praise and a few small treats! This should be a life-long practice and with positive reinforcement your pet can learn to love their biweekly nail trims.

Need some in-person guidance? Schedule a toenail trim at the clinic and we'll be happy to show you how it is done.

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## Spring Special

Did you know that maintaining proper toenail length can help your pet have healthy posture and prevent injury to the neck, back, hips and knees? Now through June 30th enjoy 50% off any toenail trim.

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**Just for Fun...**

## Why Germany never wins the Iditarod.



### In Closing

We appreciate you taking the time to read this edition of our e-newsletter and hope you've found it informative. Please let us know what you think. Your comments and suggestions are always welcomed.

If you have any questions or concerns about your animal's health, don't hesitate to call or email us.

Best always,

Dr. Peggy, Bev and All the Staff  
Sierra Animal Wellness Center

