

Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) for Your Pet

Resuscitation may consist of artificial respiration (breathing for the animal) and/or cardiac (heart) massage. If your pet does not have a heartbeat you should undertake cardiac massage. If your pet is not breathing but has a heartbeat then only perform artificial respiration. If your pet is not breathing and does not have a heartbeat then CPR (cardio-pulmonary resuscitation) is required. This involves a combination of cardiac massage (1.5 compressions per second) and artificial respiration (1 breath every 5 seconds). However, this can only be performed effectively if two people are present. If there is only one person present then the priority is continuous uninterrupted cardiac massage (do not attempt artificial respiration as well as cardiac massage). Please keep in mind that if a pet stops breathing for 3-5 minutes there is a very poor chance of survival, as massive brain damage will have occurred.

How to Check for Breathing and Heartbeat

Breathing: Lay the pet on their right hand side and watch for 15 seconds to see if the chest rises indicating your pet is breathing on their own.

Heart Beat: While your pet is lying on their right hand side, tuck their left foreleg up into their body; where the elbow touches the chest wall is where you should place your hand (or ear) to feel (hear) for a heartbeat. You can also check for a pulse: press the fingertips of your index, middle and ring finger into the crease where the inside of his thigh meets the body and feel for a pulse of the femoral artery.



Artificial Respiration

To be used if your pet is not breathing.

- Check and remove any obvious obstructions in the mouth or throat.
- Gently pull the tongue out of the mouth as far as it will comfortably go (clears the airway).
- Gently hold the pet's mouth closed without hurting the tongue and cup your hands around the nose and lips to create a 'seal'.
- Gently blow into the nostrils until the chest rises; adjust the strength and volume of your breath for the size of the pet.
- Initially give 2 large breaths for 2 seconds each. Then blow every 5 seconds for 1 second for the first minute, check the pet after a minute to see if there is a heartbeat and if your pet is breathing on its own.
- If not breathing continue 1 breath every 5 seconds, checking the pet for spontaneous breathing and a heartbeat every 2-3 breaths.
- Transport to a vet immediately, if you have a driver continue artificial respiration while in transit.

Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (using one person)

To be used if your pet is not breathing and does not have a heartbeat.

For Small Pets <15 kg

- Lay the pet on their right hand side.
- Gently extend the head and neck straight.
- Place your left hand on your pet's backline above the shoulder area; this is for support and to stop them from sliding away.
- Place the fingers of your right hand under your pet with your right thumb placed over where the heart is situated on the left hand side of the chest.
- The thumb is used to squeeze the chest wall over the heart to simulate cardiac activity.
- Start cardiac compressions: squeeze the chest wall 80-100 times per minute or 1.5 times every second. If there is only one person present then do not attempt to perform artificial respiration at the same time. The priority is to continue cardiac compressions; this will give your pet a better chance of survival.
- Regularly check the pet for a heartbeat; if a heartbeat is present stop with the cardiac compressions and check to see if your pet is breathing. If your pet is not breathing, but a heartbeat is present, start artificial respiration as described previously.
- Transport to a vet immediately, if you have a driver continue CPR during transit.

Hand placement for small dog CPR



For Large Pets >15kg

- Lay the pet on their right hand side.
- Gently extend the head and neck straight.
- Place your hands over the highest part of the chest; one hand should be placed on top of the other with the hands parallel, applying even pressure to the chest with the palm of the hand.
- Start chest compressions. Each compression should be to 1/3 of the depth of the chest at a rate of 80-100 times per minute or 1.5 times every second.
- If there is only one person present, do not attempt to perform artificial respiration at the same time. The priority is to continue chest compressions.
- Regularly check for a heartbeat; if a heartbeat is present stop with the cardiac compressions and check to see if your pet is breathing. If your pet is not breathing, but a heartbeat is present, start artificial respiration as described previously.
- Transport to a vet immediately, if you have a driver continue CPR while in transit.



Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (using two people)

To be used if your pet is not breathing and does not have a heartbeat.

- Combine artificial respiration with CPR as instructed above but DO NOT stop compressions to administer the breaths. 1.5 compressions per second and one breath every 5 seconds.
- Transport to a vet immediately, if you have a driver continue CPR while in transit.