

**Last week my dog ran into the street and was hit by a car. Luckily he wasn't injured too badly but was holding up his front leg. I wasn't sure about the proper way to transport him to my vet. What should I do if my dog ever gets hurt again and I have to get him in the car to take him for emergency care?**

The first thing you have to realize is that your pet may be in a lot of pain, especially if a bone is broken. If you touch the injured area, or try to pick him up, you may unintentionally hurt him and he may react by biting you. Under those circumstances, even the most lovable pet may not be able to control his instinct to bite if he is being hurt. As long as he does not have to keep his mouth open to breathe it is a good idea to apply a homemade muzzle. You can use a nylon leash, gauze bandage, rope or even panty hose. Wrap it around the muzzle halfway between the nose and eyes, two or three times. Then cross the ends under his chin and take them behind his ears and tie on the back of his head.

If the dog can't stand, try to move him without causing injury to his spine. Use a piece of plywood if you have it available, or perhaps a pool float or, for a small dog a collapsed box or large serving tray. Gently slide it under him. It may help to use belts or ropes to keep him lying still on the board. Try to keep his head in normal alignment with his neck, not overly flexed downward or pointing upward. Hopefully you will have someone available to help you lift him into the car using your stretcher. Speak to him in a calm, reassuring voice. Covering an injured pet with a blanket will also help calm him in addition to preventing heat loss if he is in shock.

To save precious minutes in the event of an emergency, make sure you keep phone numbers handy of your regular veterinarian's office, and where they refer clients for emergency care when they are closed. If possible, try to call ahead so they will be prepared for your arrival and can help you get your pet out of the car.

Drive carefully!

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