

First Aid For Havanese

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What to do if your Havanese is in a serious accident.

Though we don't like to think about it, there could be a time when your Havanese is in a serious accident and needs urgent medical attention from you. Here's what you need to do.

First assess the situation and decide if your Havanese needs to be moved out of harm's way, making sure you do not put yourself in harm's way in the process.

Check to see if the heart is beating

To see if the heart is beating you can put your hand on your Havanese's chest to try to feel the heart. Check the eyes. If the heart has stopped beating the eyes will dilate (get very big). You can check the Havanese's gums. If you press on the gums and then let go and the gums return to a pink color, then the heart is still beating. If they do not return to pink and are instead pale then the heart is not pumping. If the heart has stopped then you will need to give CPR.

Check to see if your Havanese is breathing

You can see if your Havanese is breathing by watching for the movement of his chest. If the chest is not moving and you find your Havanese is not breathing, you will need to give him artificial respiration right away.

What you do next is determined by what the Havanese is doing. If your Havanese is not breathing and the heart is not beating you will need to give CPR, which is the combination of artificial respiration and heart massage. If the heart is beating but the Havanese is not breathing you only want to give artificial respiration. There will not be a time when the Havanese is breathing but the heart is not beating.

How to give artificial respiration

Open the Havanese's mouth and make sure it is clear. Remove anything from its mouth that might prevent air from passing through, including mucus or fluid. Pull the tongue forward and make sure the neck is in a straight line. Place your mouth over the Havanese's nose and blow in until you see the chest expand. If you do not see the chest expand start over from the beginning and try again. If you prefer, cup your hand over the nose of the Havanese until you make an airtight seal and blow into your hand rather than directly into the nose.

Take your mouth away. The Havanese's chest should deflate. Repeat this about 20 times or until the Havanese starts to breath on his own.

How to give CPR

Place the Havanese on his side. Put the palm of one hand on the Havanese's chest just behind the left elbow and place your other hand on top of the first hand. Press downward and forward at the rate of about 100 times per minute. When you push down push toward the neck of the Havanese.

After 15 seconds of heart massage give 10 seconds of artificial respiration. Continue giving CPR until a pulse returns, then seek medical attention immediately.

Shock

Shock happens when there is not enough blood flow to meet the Havanese's needs. Any condition affecting the blood flow can induce shock.

A Havanese in shock is not to be taken lightly. Check the gums of the Havanese. Normally the gums are a healthy pink but during shock can turn a dull pink or white. In a healthy Havanese when you press on the gums you squeeze out the blood through the capillaries and when you release the blood flows back in quickly and the area returns to a normal color. If you do this and it takes more then 2 seconds for the capillaries in the gums to refill then it is a good indication that you have a Havanese in shock.

Signs of early shock

- Fast breathing
- Fast heart rate
- Pale gums
- Anxiety
- Restlessness
- Lethargy or weakness
- Capillaries in the gums take a longer than normal to fill

Advanced shock is much more serious than early shock. Basically it means the stages of early shock have gone untreated and gotten worse. If your Havanese is in late shock then conditions are dire and medical attention is needed immediately.

Signs of advanced shock

- Shallow irregular breathing
- Irregular heartbeat
- Pale or blue gums
- Extreme weakness or consciousness
- Cold body temperature (less than 98 degrees Fahrenheit)
- Capillaries in gums take more than four seconds to refill

Treating Shock

Since shock is brought on by a lack of proper blood flow, the condition that is causing this needs to be addressed first. If the Havanese is bleeding then the bleeding needs to be stopped. Once you feel you have done all you can to address the condition causing the shock you can try to alleviate the shock.

To treat shock

- Wrap the Havanese in a blanket, preferably a warm one to try to raise his body temperature and prevent heat loss
- Elevate the hind quarters with a pillow or blanket so that more blood flow can get to the brain.
- Get your Havanese medical attention right away

Heavy Bleeding

Heavy external bleeding can often be controlled by applying pressure. If available use clean non stick gauze and apply it to the bleeding. Much of the time gauze is not going to be available. In these situations use any clean absorbent material you can find such as tissue, a paper towel or a clean dish cloth. If nothing better is available clothing can be used. Apply pressure to the bleeding for at least 2 minutes. If the cloth becomes blood soaked leave it there as it will help with blood clotting.

Open Wounds

If you have stopped the bleeding then it is time to treat the open wound. Using your clean fingers or tweezers remove any debris that might be in the wound. If there is a large penetrating object in the wound such as metal or wood, do not remove it as this could induce heavy bleeding. Once you have removed any debris flush the wound with a hydrogen peroxide solution to disinfect.

Bandaging

Once the wound has been thoroughly cleaned, disinfected and dried, place a non stick absorbent pad over the wound. Next wrap gauze around the pad to keep the pad in place. Wrap firm but not tightly. You do not want to impede blood flow to the area. Finally apply a second layer that stretches to provide more support to the non stick pad. Overall the wrapping should be tight enough so it does not fall off or cannot be pulled off easily, but not so tight that it cuts off circulation.

Moving an Injured Havanese

Much care and caution should be used when moving an injured Havanese. Even a mild Havanese may try to bite when being handled after an injury. The Havanese could be very disoriented and frightened at this point so use much caution if you need to put your face near the Havanese's mouth. If a Havanese is biting a temporary muzzle can be fashioned to put around the Havanese's mouth. A torn cotton sheet, gauze or a tie can be used for this. Wrap the material around the Havanese's muzzle and cross at the bottom, then bring the two strands around the neck and behind the Havanese's ears and tie a knot.

When transporting a blanket or coat can be useful. Lay the blanket flat and gently move the Havanese on top of it with extreme care. Then pick up the blanket to transport the Havanese.

Splints

Splints are most often used in the case of a suspected broken bone. If you suspect your Havanese has broken something the first thing to do is **not** try to realign the body part. Rather your objective is to stabilize the body part so that it cannot move further. You want to splint the body part in the position in which it was found. A splint is a device used for holding a part of the Havanese's body stable and motionless to prevent pain and further injury.

In many cases you will have to use “MacGyver” type techniques to create a splint if the regular materials are not available. First you will need something that is rigid. A strong stick, board or even a rolled up newspaper can be used. Extend the splint beyond the injured area in order to keep it from moving. In general, try to include the joint above and below the injury in the splint. Secure the splint with ties (belts, cloth strips, neckties, etc.), or tape above and below the injury.

Snake Bite

The following are indications of a snake bite:

- bloody wound discharge
- fang marks in the skin and swelling at the site of the bite
- convulsions
- weakness
- excessive panting
- vomiting
- rapid heart beat
- increased temperature

How to treat a snake bite

If you can get your Havanese to an emergency clinic within 30 minutes then:

- wash the bite with soap and water
- immobilize the area that has been bitten and keep it lower than the heart to slow the venom getting to the heart.
- Apply an ice pack (frozen peas work well) to the area to reduce the size of blood vessels around the bite.

If you cannot get to an emergency clinic within 30 minutes:

- Apply a bandage wrapped two to four inches above the bite to help slow the venom. This should not cut off the flow of blood from a vein or artery; rather the band should be loose enough to slip a finger under.
- A suction device can be placed over the bite to help draw venom out of the wound without making cuts. These devices are often included in commercial snake bite kits.

Poisoning

Poison by contact

Contact poison is any poison that gets on a Havanese's skin. This could include paint, motor oil and tar among others. Never use chemical substances to get chemicals such as these off of your Havanese. Use these methods instead:

- If the substance is soft put on dishwashing gloves and rub vegetable oil into the substance. Wash with soapy water, dog or baby shampoo and rinse out well with water.
- If the Havanese is heavily contaminated rub corn starch and flour in with the vegetable oil and wash out thoroughly.

Poison by Swallowing

Many Havanese will try to eat almost anything. This puts responsibility on you to keep dangerous things out of your Havanese's reach so he can't get to them. These include alkaline cleaners, solvents, paint removers, antifreeze, prescription drugs, aspirin, insect bait and repellants, wood preservatives and lawn chemicals. Keep your Havanese away from any lawns that may have been recently treated with chemicals. Signs will often be posted on recently treated public lawns.

There are only certain cases where you will want to induce vomiting. If your Havanese is alert, showing signs of poisoning and has not vomited you can try to induce vomiting. If he is seizing or his vital signs are dropping skip trying to induce vomiting and get to the vet or an emergency clinic immediately.

If you know that a poison such as a pest control or herbicide has been swallowed in the last two hours:

- vomiting can be induced by giving one teaspoon of 3% hydrogen peroxide every 15 minutes until vomiting occurs.
- Give one to two teaspoons of Activated Charcoal Powder mixed with 8 ounces of water. This helps absorb the poison.
- You can call your local poison control for extra advice.

Note: If the poison ingested is petroleum based, acid or alkali based, do not induce vomiting. Instead get to the vet or an emergency clinic immediately.

Havanese First Aid Kit

The following should be kept in your home and in the car when you are traveling with your Havanese in case of emergency.

- Gauze pads
- Gauze rolls
- An old sock or two to hold foot bandaging in place
- Athletic tape
- Sterile cotton or cotton swabs
- Tweezers
- Blunt tipped scissors
- Hydrogen Peroxide
- Veterinary ointment
- Ophthalmic drops or ointment
- Old towel or blanket for transporting
- Blanket for warmth in case of shock
- Rectal thermometer
- Teaspoon for measuring

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