



Signs of Illness for Foster Animals

Emergencies

If you have an emergency during business hours, please contact PAWS and someone will advise you of the best course of action. After hours, please call or text the emergency phone number from the first page of your foster manual.

What constitutes a medical emergency? A good rule of thumb is **any situation in which you would call 911 for a person**. Here are some specific symptoms that could indicate an emergency:

The following are some symptoms that require immediate attention:

- Not breathing or labored breathing with pale or bluish gums, excessive panting or incessant coughing.
- Vomiting of bile or blood
- Severe diarrhea, especially when accompanied with vomiting
- Pronounced limping or paralysis, abnormal lethargy or unable to stand
- Unconsciousness or unable to wake up, seizures, uneven pupil dilation or fainting
- Severe behavior changes
- Symptoms of parvovirus (dog): bloody diarrhea, vomiting, weakness, high fever (above 103.5 degrees)
- Signs of extreme dehydration: dry mucous membranes, weakness, vomiting, tenting of the skin (when the skin on the neck is pulled up, it stays there)
- Broken bones
- Any trauma: hit by a car, dropped, stepped on
- A large wound or profuse bleeding that doesn't stop when pressure is applied
- Loss of appetite for more than 12 hours (two meals)

If your foster animal displays any of these symptoms, please follow the emergency phone protocol. If the animal is vomiting or has diarrhea, but is still active, eating and drinking, you can probably wait until the next day to get help. If a foster animal should pass away, please contact us immediately!

For true emergencies during normal business hours, bring your foster to our clinic immediately. After hours, please call or text the emergency phone number given to you.

General Veterinary Care

PAWS provides all medical care for our foster animals at our approved veterinary clinics. Because we are ultimately responsible for your foster's well-being, *our staff must authorize and arrange in advance for all treatment for foster animals at our clinics or with our approved veterinary partners.*

For non-emergencies, please understand that we book quickly and may not be available for same-day appointments. We ask that you schedule basic non-emergency appointments at least 24 hours in advance.

All contact numbers are on the first page of your foster manual and online at www.phillypaws.org/foster-resources/

Shelter animals are frequently exposed to illnesses that can be contagious to other animals. These illnesses have incubation periods before symptoms appear. Your foster animal may have been infected before going home, but not show symptoms until after you bring them home. For this reason, it is required that you quarantine your foster animal from your own pets for the first 14 days. If symptoms occur once the animal is in your care, please contact us to schedule an appointment in our clinic. For hospice fosters, please do not take a wait-and-see approach if they are not eating or drinking. Please call or email for an appointment and advice on what to do in the meantime.

Important: Any veterinary appointments made outside of the PAWS veterinary clinic are your financial responsibility. PAWS will not reimburse you for any medical care received at your own vet. Our vets have set up a treatment plan for each animal's specific needs and it is not wise to change treatment plans without consulting the primary PAWS vet. Even if we do not have appointments available on a given day, we can typically at least get you in to see a tech who can assess the urgency of your foster's problem. PAWS will not pay for any medical treatment for a resident animal who became sick due to exposure to your foster.

Symptoms of Illness:

- Yellow or green discharge from eyes or nose. Bloody nose, scabs or skin loss on nose, excessive sneezing.
- Swollen conjunctiva (skin on the inside of eyelids), including third eyelid, white film or cloudiness over eye, yellowing on white part of eyes, or red and blinking eye irritation.
- Ears with dark, flaky debris or dark, yeasty smell with or without discharge. Frequent scratching at ears, or painful when rubbed or cleaned.
- Loss of appetite, increased appetite for over a week. Vomiting, more than three times.
- Coughing, sneezing, and/or gagging accompanied by phlegm.



- Trouble eating or chewing, painful gums or teeth. Bright red gums or pale gums. Ulcers or lacerations on gums or lips. Excessive salivation, especially a change in the amount of salivation.
- Redness, lacerations, lumps, scabs, frequent scratching of skin. Fleas.
- Dry coat (if coat is dry and lackluster, it can be due to illness or improper diet).
- Sudden lameness/limping that doesn't improve with rest within 24 hours, pain upon walking or handling, lethargic, weakness.
- Excessive drinking, increased urination or accidents in the house, straining to urinate or defecate.
- ****Hair loss**** This can indicate ringworm, which needs to be diagnosed as early as possible; always make an appointment to have any hair loss promptly examined by a vet.
- No bowel movement for more than 48 hours, no urination for more than 24 hours, discoloration/changes in feces, hematuria (blood in urine).
- Diarrhea (see below)



Diarrhea

Please note: there is a difference between loose stool and true diarrhea, which is watery. Watery stool always indicates a problem. Slightly soft stool could be due to stress, change of diet, antibiotics or a minor parasitic infection. If they are eating, drinking, and acting normally, give it 24-48 hours to see if it clears up. You can add plain canned pumpkin to their food to help soothe the intestinal tract. If the diarrhea is truly a watery consistency, please email immediately.

Temperature

Please contact a PAWS clinic immediately if the rectal temperature is below 98.5F or above 102.5F at rest.

Nasal Congestion

If cats are having difficulty breathing from being congested, you can put a humidifier in their room, or put them in the bathroom with the shower running as hot as possible for 20 minutes at a time. Make sure to wipe their noses after they come out of the bathroom.

