

BROKEN LEG

SYMPTOMS OF A BROKEN LEG

- Limping;
- Doesn't use its leg;
- Swelling of the leg;
- Abnormal position of the leg and pain.

TREATMENT OPTIONS



DO NOT give any painkillers to the animal such as *Aspirine*® unless advised by a veterinarian.

- Immobilize the limb (if indicated) and transport the animal South to have it evaluated by a veterinarian;



If it is impossible to transport the animal South, contact the Veterinary Help Line to have a veterinarian help you assess your animal's condition and determine the best treatment option.

- Immobilize the limb for 3 to 4 weeks if these criterions are met:
 - Broken leg is stable (leg under the site of the break is in a normal position) AND;
 - Break in the bone is below the elbow or knee AND;
 - The skin is intact.
- It is better to put down the animal humanely if it cannot be transported to see a veterinarian AND:
 - Broken leg is unstable (leg under the break is in an abnormal position or is very mobile);
 - Break in the bone is above the knee or elbow;
 - Bone has cut through the skin and is exposed;
 - Animal is suffering (stops to eat, cries, refuses to walk or move).



HOW TO SPLINT A BROKEN LEG



When making a bandage, wrap the different layers around the limb going in the same direction. It is easier to make a bandage when the animal is lying on the opposite side of the broken leg. Moreover, it is safer to splint a broken leg when the animal is muzzled.

1. Wash your hands with soap and water or put on latex gloves;
2. If skin is intact, go to the next step. If the bone is exposed, rinse the wound with lukewarm water. Blot it dry and apply a water-based lubricant (*MedPro*[®]) over the entire surface of the wound. Cover the entire wound with a piece of *Telfa Pad*[®]. Secure with fabric adhesive tape;
3. Cotton roll layer (1/2 to 1 inch thick).
Tip: start at the end of the foot and end at the shoulder or hip and always leave at least 2 toes out of the bandage;



4. Rolled gauze layer;





5. Place splints on both sides and secure with fabric adhesive tape or duct tape.

Tips:

- The splint placed on the inside of the leg should be 1 inch away from the armpit (front leg) or abdomen (rear leg);
- The splint placed on the outside of the leg should be long enough to start at the toes and finish at the level of the shoulder or hip;
- Make sure there are no rough edges on the splints.



6. Elastic bandage layer (layers of cotton and rolled gauze should be visible at both ends of the bandage).

Tip: To ensure not to apply the elastic bandage too tight, unroll it completely prior to use and roll it up loosely back onto the roll.



You should be able to fit 2 fingers under the bandage. Check it every 12 hours the first day, then daily for swelling or discomfort of the toes: these indicate the bandage is too tight, in which case you will need to loosen it.

The animal should be supervised at all times or an Elizabethan collar placed around its neck to prevent the animal from chewing, biting or eating its bandage.

If the animal cannot be evaluated by a veterinarian, the bandage should be changed once a week for 3 to 4 weeks. The limb should be bandaged and the animal kept at complete rest for a minimum of 3 to 4 weeks.



Contact the Veterinary Help Line to seek free veterinary advice at 514 345-8521 ext. 0065 or nunavik-giv@medvet.umontreal.ca