

KALAMAZOO ANIMAL RESCUE

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KAR Friends

June 2009

Dear Reader,

First aid for pet owners is our feature story this month. Special thanks to Dr. Bruce Withers of **Eighth Street Veterinary Care** for contributing this insightful article to *KAR Friends*.

This month's Doggie Den offers some insights about energy level when making a decision to adopt a dog. Our Cat's Corner tells about the life-saving rescue of Mary.

Danielle Wallis
KAR Marketing Coordinator

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KAR Friends Editor

P.S. Did you receive the **special Spring Edition newsletter** that was mailed the end of May? If you missed it, [click here](#) to read about more great KAR rescue and adoption stories .

FIRST AID FOR THE PET OWNER

By Bruce Withers, DVM
www.eighthstreetvet.com

Along with the many joys and duties of pet ownership, comes the responsibility of occasional medical care. Preventive medical care is very important because it will avert many illnesses and preserve a longer quality of life. But some medical problems are likely to arise with or without good preventive care or due caution. For that reason, it is important that pet owners be aware of how they should react for certain conditions or problems. First aid by the pet owner can help to provide comfort and early medical care until veterinary help can be obtained. Entire books are devoted to the subject, but a few common rules of thumb to follow should be helpful to the average pet owner.

There are levels of pet health care, ranging from acute trauma care to chronic illness.

Once a medical problem is recognized, it is important to ensure the safety of people first, then the animal. If there is an injury involving vehicular trauma, house fire, electrical injury, water or drowning, or even an animal attack, a person must first be aware of his and others' safety before attempting to assist an animal. Next, a quick assessment of the animal's status should be done: Is the pet conscious? Breathing? Is the pet able to move? Painful? Bleeding? Are there any obvious wounds? Is there a history of vomiting, diarrhea, loss of appetite or weight loss? All of these questions are important in order to be able to provide immediate help to the pet and to provide information to veterinary staff. As soon as possible, veterinary care should be contacted for advice regarding treatment or transport.



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FIRST AID FOR THE PET OWNER (continued)

Simply recognizing that a problem exists can be key to successful early care of the pet. Early reporting of toxic ingestion, for instance, is critical if a pet will survive some toxicities. Though some toxicities show almost no adverse effects until later, pet owners should be aware of the toxic nature of: antifreeze, mouse bait, onions, grapes, raisins, dark chocolate, Tylenol, ibuprofen, lilies, and many human medications. Calling the veterinarian or animal poison control center early after suspected ingestion is extremely important. It is likely that vomiting should be induced if early (within 2-3 hours). Hydrogen peroxide is often recommended to be given orally, so it should be available to the pet owner. Immediate transport to veterinary emergency is often advised after vomiting occurs so other medications or evaluation can be provided.

Trauma is a very broad topic, and all too common for pet owners. Vehicular traumas have a high mortality or complication rate, compared to lesser forms of trauma. Whatever the type of trauma, common types of evaluation and aid are important. Always be mindful that a pet in pain is often a scared pet, and may bite defensively even if totally out of character for that particular animal. A muzzle is an important item to have available if any type of care is to be given at home to a painful animal. Just be certain the pet can breathe sufficiently with the muzzle in place. A board or blanket can be used to support a pet for transport out of harm's way and/or to the emergency hospital. Hemorrhage should be confined by a bandage when possible, and severe hemorrhage on a limb could have a tourniquet placed prior to seeking emergency care. Less severe wounds may be washed with cool water or saline, and have triple antibiotic or first-aid ointment and a light bandage applied. If there is debris within a wound, tweezers or hemostats can be used to gently remove foreign material. If pain is experienced, it is best to wait until the pet can be properly sedated or anesthetized. Immobilizing a limb may be very difficult to do, so care should be taken to avoid moving an injured limb when possible. Eye trauma is another important emergency that should receive early treatment to avoid permanent loss of vision. Saline may be used to flush debris from the eye. Preventing the pet from further rubbing or traumatizing the eye is also important. Artificial tears ointment or drops are always safe to apply to an eye to provide some relief until medical care is found.

Allergic reactions are one of the most common urgent care situations a pet owner may face. Rarely, allergic reaction may be due to vaccination or medication a pet has received. More commonly, insect bites (bees, wasps, ants, spiders) may cause clinical signs of facial swelling of the eyes, ears and muzzle, hives on the body or red blotchy lesions on the skin. Benadryl (diphenhydramine) is often recommended as an immediate treatment at home when available, then transport the pet to emergency if severe signs are present or if the pet is not improving. The dosage should be recommended by the attending veterinary staff, but having the medication on hand at home is very helpful. Capsules or tablets for pets over 20 pounds, and elixir for pets less than 20 pounds is most efficient.

Another common pet emergency is that of gastrointestinal upset, resulting in vomiting or diarrhea. The first rule is to prevent any further ingestion of food or water until veterinary staff can be alerted. It is a common mistake to offer a "tempting treat" to a sick pet, which often upsets the GI tract further. Withholding fluids for short durations may be recommended, and longer withholding of solid food may be recommended depending upon the situation. A vomiting pet should not be muzzled as aspiration could occur.

In this age of 24-hour veterinary emergency advice and treatment, and Internet pet health information, care for your pet is readily available. A pet owner should therefore have a plan for whom they should contact when an emergency takes place. The phone number for emergency veterinary care should be placed in an accessible place

UPCOMING EVENTS

Visit the [“Events” page on our website](#) for upcoming adoption (and other) events.



FIRST AID FOR THE PET OWNER (continued)

as well as a first-aid kit. Having awareness of your pet's particular medical condition and history is very helpful and early treatment at home perhaps critical to a good outcome. Providing basic first aid and contacting veterinary care early in the course of disease will give your pet the best chance of doing well. It is generally advised that oral medication not be administered until a veterinarian is contacted, but having some medications on hand may be helpful.

A basic first-aid kit should be assembled to provide care when a pet is injured or in need of medical care. Some or all of the following could be considered in such a kit:

- Bandage materials, tape and scissors
- Gauze padding
- Benadryl (diphenhydramine)
- Saline solution
- Artificial tears
- Thermometer
- Neosporin/antibiotic ointment
- Tweezers or hemostats
- Muzzle
- Mylanta
- Hydrogen peroxide
- Phone numbers for Veterinary Emergency and Animal Poison Control

DATES TO REMEMBER

- June is [Adopt-a-Cat](#) month. Visit the KAR website to see the adoptable [cats](#) and [kittens](#) looking for forever homes.
- June 26th is [Take Your Dog to Work Day](#).

BEHIND THE SCENES

Volunteer of the Month, Dennis Herman

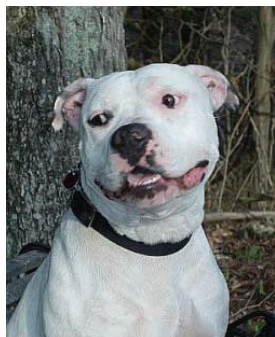
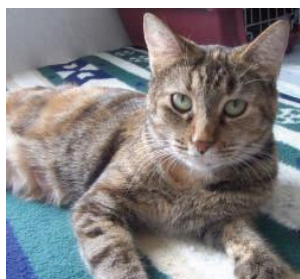
Dennis joined Kalamazoo Animal Rescue in 2001 after retiring from his job as a milkman. His wife Kae was already actively involved with KAR fostering cats and kittens in their home. It made sense that Dennis would follow his wife and become a volunteer too.

Dennis and his wife care for sick and injured cats that come into the rescue as well as specializing in bottle feeding kittens, sometimes every four hours around the clock to ensure that they are looked after. This kind of dedication is difficult to find in a volunteer, especially since so much care and attention needs to be paid to tiny babies.

Over the years Dennis and Kae have fostered over 60 cats and kittens. In addition to this, Dennis is always on hand to help at the weekend adoption events KAR has at pet stores in the area. Even if he has no cats or kittens to bring, he is someone whom we can depend upon to do heavy lifting, cleaning and screening applications we receive from the public.



PETS OF THE MONTH

HowieSnickers**BEHIND THE SCENES** (continued)

Dennis is also an adoption counselor, responsible for ensuring that the person who applies for a cat is adequately queried and educated about proper care of cats prior to them being adopted and taken to a new home.

A very important and valued volunteer, thank you Dennis (and Kae) for all you have done and continue to do for the cats of Kalamazoo.

DOGGIE DEN

What Energy Level is Right for You?

By Lynn Bolhuis

In the April issue we discussed age as a consideration when adopting a dog. Another very important factor to consider prior to adopting is energy level. The secret to a happy and long-term relationship with your pet is making sure your energy is compatible with the dog you select. This article offers some tips on how to assess your energy as well as the prospective pets when making a decision on the dog to adopt.

**Assessing Your Energy**

Here are some questions to think about when assessing the physical activity level in your home:

1. What is your overall lifestyle?
2. What are your reasons for getting a dog (exercise, companionship)?
3. How active are you? Do you wake up in the morning raring to go or do you prefer a more leisurely pace?
4. Do you or members of your family participate in outdoor activities on a regular basis that can be shared with a dog?
5. Is your family willing to work together and share responsibilities to ensure a dog receives daily exercise? Training and socialization? And, other care he will require over his lifetime?

Energy Levels

Everyone has a certain level of energy. The four levels of energy described below are from a dog's point of view but they are just as applicable to humans.

Low – Dogs with low energy prefer rest to activity, these are your couch potatoes and lap warmers. Pets at this level can get by with a couple daily walks for exercise.

Medium – Dogs with medium energy seek out normal physical activities but balance their day with equal periods of rest and relaxation.

High – Dogs with high energy are very athletic. They prefer vigorous activities but tire out normally and are ready to sleep at the end of the day.

Very High – Dogs with very high energy are constantly on the move, from morning 'til night. They can walk or run for hours and, even when you have exercised them, they still seem to have more energy.

KAR LINKS

- ADOPT a [Kitten, Cat or Dog](#)
- [VOLUNTEER](#)
- Become a [FOSTER FAMILY](#)
- [Senior Cat Companions](#)
- KAR [Website](#)



Make a [DONATION!](#)

DOGGIE DEN (continued)

Assessing a Dog's Energy

When looking for a dog to adopt, energy isn't necessarily determined by age or breed, though both factors can provide some guidance. It is possible to find a dog that is calm at a young age, as well as to find a mellow dog within a breed that is considered energetic.

1. Do your research on dog breeds and their energy levels. Here are a couple of resources to explore:
 - [Characteristics: energy levels](#)
 - [Breeds and energy levels](#)
2. If you are trying to assess a dog at a shelter, it may be difficult to determine how much energy they have because of their confinement. Ask shelter workers about the animal to learn as much about him as possible and to give you a better idea of what he will be like in your home. If possible, check to see if you can take him for a walk to see how you get along together.
3. If you are looking at a dog that is being cared for by a breeder or in a foster home, ask the caregiver how energetic the dog is to ensure he is compatible with your own energy.

Assessing the energy level of yourself, your family and the prospective pet is an important step to finding a match that will endure. People often adopt a dog based on emotion and later discover the pet has more energy than they do. In time, the dog may start to exhibit unwanted behaviors because they are not getting the exercise they need. The best guideline is to select a dog with an energy level that matches your own or is one level lower. If you already have a dog and are looking for a playmate, the new pet's energy should not be higher than your existing dogs.

If you opt for a high or very high energy dog, be prepared to channel the animal's energy into appropriate physical activities. In a future issue of *KAR Friends*, we'll identify activities that can help expend some of your pet's energy.

Additional Resources:

- [The right energy](#)
- Cesar Millan's latest book, *A Member of the Family*.

CONTACT US

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Visit our [website](#)

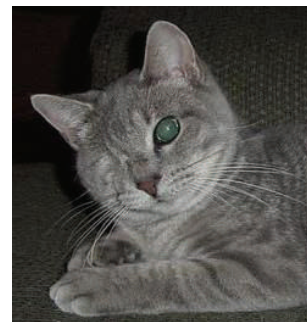
[Questions or
suggestions](#) for the
newsletter?

CAT'S CORNER

Mary, A Survivor

By Darline McDaniel

Mary was found outside, lost, alone and nursing kittens. Somehow she received a serious injury to her eye which left her unable to see and in a great deal of pain. Although Mary faced personal difficulties, she did her best to feed and care for her babies.



Kalamazoo Animal Rescue was made aware of her plight and our volunteers sprung into action. Mary was evaluated and it was easy to see how desperately she needed help. I decided to take her and the kittens into my home and nurse them all back to health.

Mary was immediately taken to a veterinarian to assess the eye injury. Unfortunately her eye could not be saved and had to be removed. Mary began to heal and feel much better after surgery. She has received lots of TLC in her foster home and is now fully recovered. The kittens have all been adopted but Mary is still waiting for a forever home where she will be loved and cherished.

Mary is a domestic, short hair, tabby and grey mix. Her coat is very soft and shiny. Mary is medium sized and approximately two-years old. She is microchipped and litter trained, and would be happiest in a home where she would be the only cat. If you want to learn more about this special girl, check out [Mary's biography](#) and fill out an online application!

[Click here](#) to see Mary's makeover pictures from beginning to end.

About Us

Kalamazoo Animal Rescue is an all-volunteer, federally recognized 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that was founded in 1991 and is funded entirely through private donations.

KAR is dedicated to providing refuge to homeless, stray and abandoned cats and dogs in Southwest Michigan.

Our volunteers give their time and energy to the efforts of rescuing animals and helping them to find permanent homes.