

What to Expect When Your Pet Needs Emergency Care

We recognize that making a trip to the Emergency Room can be a scary and stressful experience or at the very least an inconvenience due to the unexpected interruption in your day. To help alleviate some of the anxiety and stress that is natural with these types of visits, we have created this information sheet to help you understand what happens during a visit to the emergency room.



Arriving to the Emergency Room: Our Care Process

No appointment is required for the emergency room, but many times owners or referring veterinarians may call ahead to alert us to a patient's arrival. However, no matter if we are expecting your pet or you simply walk in our doors, you will be immediately greeted by a member of our reception team. They will quickly gather some information and notify the medical staff of your arrival.

Patients who present to the hospital for an emergency come for a wide variety of reasons. Owners may realize their pet is facing a potentially life-threatening illness or injury while others may come for more minor medical issues such as an ear infection or limping after a trip to the park. Each of these patients are important, so to ensure that the doctors are focusing on the most severely ill or injured animals, a brief and immediate **triage** – a quick assessment of symptoms and a brief history of the main concern for presenting to the ER – will be conducted by a member of the emergency medical team. In most cases, a senior (fourth year) veterinary student will perform

triage. Our students are important members of the emergency medical team and will assist not only with triage, but also keeping you informed throughout your pet's visit.

Following triage, the student will take your pet to the treatment area for a more thorough examination by a doctor. While your patient is being examined, we ask that you remain in the lobby or close by until you have spoken with the doctor about treatment recommendations.

Please keep in mind that the severity of illness or injury can impact how long you may wait before hearing from the doctor as they prioritize patient care based upon their triage assessment.

To learn more, please see [Understanding Wait Times and Communications](#) on page 2.



Understanding Our Payment Collection and Estimating Process

After your pet has been triaged and taken to the treatment room by the student for evaluation by the doctor, the receptionist will complete the registration and will collect the emergency room fees and a small deposit towards care. Unfortunately, no treatment can be provided without an initial payment for the emergency room fee and small deposit towards care. We accept check and all major credit cards. In addition, we offer financing through [Care Credit™](#). [Care Credit™](#) is a credit card (revolving credit) that can be used for veterinary care and other related medical expenses.

If you are interested in this financing option, please speak with the reception team or you can visit our website at go.osu.edu/VetFinance.

Please note, should the medical team determine that your patient is unstable or in a more serious state, you may be asked for an additional deposit of \$450, to allow them to quickly perform initial diagnostic tests and/or treatments to help stabilize the patient and give the doctor a better understanding of the patient's condition. It is for this reason that we need you to remain in the hospital lobby until you speak with the emergency doctor assigned to your pet's case.

After stabilization and any initial diagnostics, the doctor will communicate with you if additional procedures, treatments or hospitalization is recommended. At that time, you will be presented with a written estimate of costs, and all options will be discussed with you. Once a medical care plan is agreed upon, you will be asked to pay an additional deposit that equals 75 percent of the high end of the estimate.

When your pet is ready to go home, you will be provided with a thorough discharge plan. The reception team will provide you with an itemized invoice and then collect any remaining balance due.

Understanding Wait Times and Communications

Due to the unpredictability and varied severity of patient problems, long wait times are sometimes experienced with emergency care. **The average visit times are at least 2-4 hours.**

After talking with the doctor and reaching agreement on a plan for your pet's care, you are welcome to wait in our lobby or leave. We ask that while your pet is with us that you please leave your cell phone on and answer all calls so that we can keep you updated and informed (this may include calls that show up as "blocked"). If you decide to leave the hospital to wait, please let the reception team know and then check back in with them upon your return.

Should the doctor recommend hospitalization for advanced treatment and further diagnostics, as mentioned in the payment section, you will be presented with a written estimate of those costs. Upon acceptance of a treatment plan and estimated costs, the reception team will collect a deposit. After that step has been completed, you are welcome to head out if you live in the area, or if you need help locating a hotel or restaurants our reception team can provide you with a list of businesses that are located close to the hospital.

Please note, with overnight hospitalization, your next point of contact will be with the medical team taking over your pet's case. Depending on when your pet is admitted, that may not be until the following morning. To account for the time needed to assess patients, perform diagnostics and establish plans, those morning calls may be made as late as 12 noon.

Our reception desk is staffed and open 24 hours a day. Please feel free to call **614-292-3551** if you have any questions or concerns during your pet's stay. They are here to help!

We thank you for choosing The Ohio State University Veterinary Medical Center for your pet's emergency medical needs. We appreciate your patronage and support of our teaching mission.

