

What is “triage” and why is it important?

Just like at a human ER, we see patients based on the severity of their condition, starting with animals who are experience life-threatening illnesses or injuries. Our team will perform an initial evaluation of your pet and assign a level of severity to them. This process is called “triage” and it helps us know how quickly your pet needs to be seen by a veterinarian.

You’re worried about your pet—we are, too! Below is a summary of the levels of severity, the order in which they are typically seen, and examples of common conditions. If your pet is assigned a less severe score, there might be other resources available to you, including Urgent Care appointments or seeing your primary veterinarian.

SEVERITY	Stat Your pet needs immediate attention from a veterinarian.	Critical Your pet needs attention from a veterinarian quickly for stabilization or treatment.	Intensive Your pet likely needs stabilization or treatment.	Urgent You pet’s vitals are normal and they are stable enough to wait to be seen by a veterinarian.	Stable Your pet’s condition could be addressed by a primary care veterinarian rather than an ER team.
ORDER SEEN	Seen Before All Patients	Time Sensitive After “Stat” Patients	Seen After “Stat” and “Critical” Patients	Seen Before “Stable” Patients	Last to Be Seen in ER
EXAMPLES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cardiac arrest • Respiratory distress • Severe blood clots • Pale gums • Bloat • Lying on side and not responding • Visible internal organs • Hit by vehicle and not walking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critically abnormal vitals • Acting dizzy or drunk • Having a seizure • Unable to urinate • Fracture with bone exposed • Eye out of socket • Toxin ingestion • Severe pain 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not eating or drinking • Vomiting • Toxin ingestion without symptoms • Paralyzed • Known foreign body ingestion • Moderate pain • Allergic reactions • Nosebleeds • Fractures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulty walking • Decreased appetite • Black stool or liquid diarrhea • Sudden and persistent limping • New, unexplained bruising • Dehydration • Severe itching • Head tilt 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local swelling, redness, or discomfort • Soft stool • Mild discomfort or itching • Head shaking • Chronic limping • Chronic coughing