

How to Create a Senior Pet Emergency Plan (Checklist Included)

Emergencies don't wait for a convenient time. And when you have a senior pet, time is often even more critical. Whether it's a health crisis, natural disaster, or simply needing to leave your pet with a sitter, having a plan in place can give you peace of mind—and could save your pet's life.

Here's how to build an emergency plan tailored to your senior dog or cat.

1. Build a Pet Emergency Binder

Keep this somewhere easy to grab (or share a digital version with loved ones).

Include:

- Your vet's name, clinic, and phone number
 - Emergency and specialty hospital contacts
 - A copy of recent medical records
 - Diagnosis list and current medications (name, dose, frequency)
 - Supplement list and diet details
 - Allergies, fears, or special care instructions
 - End-of-life preferences, DNR status if applicable
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2. Create a Go-Bag or Emergency Kit

Pack essentials in a small bin or backpack:

- A few days of medications and supplements (rotate monthly)
 - Food, treats, collapsible bowls, water
 - Towels or pee pads
 - Extra leash, harness, ID tags
 - Waste bags or litter supplies
 - Familiar toy or blanket
 - Mobility aid (if needed)
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3. Prepare for In-Home Health Emergencies

Senior pets are more likely to experience sudden issues like collapse, seizures, difficulty breathing, or confusion.

Know:

- Where your closest ER vet is and how to get there quickly
 - Signs that warrant immediate care vs. watchful waiting
 - How to safely transport your pet (towel sling, stretcher, etc.)
 - When to stop home care and head to a clinic
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4. Set Up a Sitter & Evacuation Plan

Whether you're away for a weekend or dealing with a fire or flood, your pet needs backup.

- Write out clear instructions for any pet sitter, including how to give meds
 - Leave contact info and vet details in a visible spot
 - have a payment method for emergencies in place - I have a CareCredit card on file at my local ER and leave the card with the petsitter just incase
 - Know where you can go with your pet if you need to evacuate
 - Keep a carrier accessible for cats or small dogs
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Bonus: Download the Printable Checklist

We created a printable **Senior Pet Emergency Plan Checklist** to make this easier. Stick it on your fridge, hand it to your sitter, or take it with you to the vet.

Planning ahead doesn't mean expecting the worst—it means protecting your pet when it matters most. And when your pet is a senior, those extra steps can make all the difference.

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Senior Pet Emergency Plan Checklist

Use this checklist to make sure you're ready in case of emergency. Keep it with your emergency binder or in an easily accessible spot at home.

1. Pet Emergency Binder

- Vets' name, clinic, and phone number*
- Emergency and specialty hospital contact info*
- Copy of recent medical records*
- List of diagnoses and current medications (name, dose, frequency)*
- Supplement list and diet details*
- Allergies, fears, or special care instructions*
- End-of-life preferences, DNR status if applicable*

2. Go-Bag or Emergency Kit

- Medications and supplements (rotate monthly)*
- Several days' worth of food and treats*
- Collapsible bowls and water bottle*
- Towels or pee pads*
- Extra leash, harness, and ID tags*
- Waste bags or litter box supplies*
- Familiar toy or blanket*
- Mobility aid (if needed)*

3. In-Home Health Emergency Prep

- Know your closest ER vet and route*
- Recognize signs that need urgent care (collapse, seizures, confusion, etc.)*
- Transport aid (towel sling, stretcher, etc.)*
- Know when to stop home care and head to the vet*

4. Sitter & Evacuation Plan

- Written instructions for sitter (medications, feeding, etc.)*
- Vet and emergency contact info left in visible place*
- Payment method in place (e.g. CareCredit on file, card left with sitter)*
- Evacuation destination that accepts pets*
- Accessible carrier for cats or small dogs*