

IMMEDIATE CANINE CARE ASSESSMENT

Take a deep breath. Your calm is your Lab's best medicine right now. Panicking can lead to rushed decisions or remedies that backfire. We want to focus on these three goals: protect your dog, gather vet-ready details, and avoid common mistakes that delay recovery.

STEP ONE

SECURE THE SCENE (keeps your Lab safe).

- Move your Lab to a quiet, comfortable spot away from stairs, other pets, or kids.
- Block access to pools, roads, or anything he could fall into.
- Clear the area of anything he might choke on.
- If he's having a seizure, dim the lights, remove nearby objects, and time it – never put anything in his mouth.

STEP TWO

QUICK “ABC” CHECK (calms panic and collects vital data).

Stand back for 30 seconds and observe without touching. Note the following:

- **Airway/Breathing:** Is he breathing easily or panting hard? Count breaths per minute (normal is 10-30 at rest). Record data: _____
- **Behavior:** Is he responsive to his name? Can he stand? Is his tail wagging? Any vomiting, diarrhea, blood, limping, or swelling? Record data: _____
- **Circulation:** Check gum color (should be pink and moist, not pale, blue, or bright red) and capillary refill (press gum; color returns in under two seconds). Record data: _____

- When did this start? _____
- Anything new like food, treats, plants, or other dogs? _____
- Has he eaten/drunk today? _____
- Temperature (rectal is best – normal 100-102.5°F; take if you have a pet thermometer and have experience in doing this): _____

STEP THREE

OFFER COMFORT WITHOUT INTERVENTION (don't make matters worse).

- Provide a “soft environment,” easy access to water, comfortable climate, etc.
- Skip human medications, hydrogen peroxide, or home remedies unless your vet specifically approves them over the phone.
- No bland diet yet if he's completely off food; wait for guidance.
- Isolate from other dogs.

STEP FOUR

CALL FOR HELP.

- Text or call your veterinarian right away.
- Keep your notes handy if there is a telemedicine consult and take them with you for an in-person exam.
- If he's collapsed, bleeding, struggling to breathe, or seizing longer than a minute, head to the nearest emergency clinic immediately.

STEP FIVE

MONITOR AND FOLLOW UP.

- Keep a log every few hours: appetite, bathroom habits, energy level.
- Note any changes in symptoms (new or different).