

## Feline First Aid

**Knowing some basic first-aid techniques can help you save your kitten's life.**

*Arnold Plotnick, DVM*

Most kittens endure kittenhood relatively unscathed. A few, however, deplete several of their nine lives in the course of growing up. Knowing the principles of first aid can help your kitten survive that turbulent first year of life. As an interim measure until veterinary care becomes available, the objective of first aid is to prevent a condition from worsening, alleviate pain and suffering and help the recovery process. Getting veterinary help still remains the highest priority.

The Top 6 Despite our best precautions, we may find ourselves facing a kitten health emergency. The most common disasters that strike kittens are burns, electric cord injury, choking, bee stings, fractures and poisonings. 1. Burns: Most kitten burns occur from thermal objects such as heating pads, heat lamps or scalding hot liquids. Kittens may jump onto stovetops and burn their feet or tails. If your kitten experiences a burn, immediately apply a cool, damp towel to the area for 30 minutes. Cover with a loose bandage and take your pet to a veterinarian. Do not put ice directly on the area, and avoid ointments, as they are difficult to remove. 2. Electric shock: Kittens are most likely to chew or bite a dangling electric cord because it is seen as a perfect plaything. Many incidents happen around the holidays. "The combination of Christmas lights and kittens as Christmas gifts increases the chances of this emergency occurring," said Steve Baker, DVM, an associate veterinarian at the Pet Care Clinic in Meridian, Idaho. "We encourage our clients to kittenproof their trees, nativity scenes and other holiday decorations. Nobody wants to spend Christmas Eve in an emergency clinic as a result of natural kitten curiosity." Biting through an electrical cord can cause, at the very least, a painful electrical burn on the mouth and tongue, which often becomes infected and requires veterinary care. Severely shocked cats can go into cardiac arrest or develop pulmonary edema (fluid accumulation in the lungs). Kittens that chew through electric cords should be taken to a veterinarian immediately, even if the kitten only appears to have minor burns.