

Fractured Limb

Find out what a veterinarian recommends for treating a cat's broken bone.

Elaine Wexler-Mitchell, D.V.M.

Q. What should I do if I suspect my cat has fractured a limb?

Elaine Wexler-Mitchell, D.V.M., says: If you suspect that your cat has fractured a limb, use extreme care when picking her up or checking her because she may bite you. A broken bone is a painful injury. If you see your cat hopping around on three legs, it is a good indication a limb is broken since cats do not put any weight on a broken limb. Swelling can be a sign of a fracture, but it is also indicative of a bite wound or insect sting. A fracture where part of the bone is exposed is called a compound, or open fracture, which you should cover with a clean towel for protection. If you suspect any type of fracture, take your cat to a veterinarian as soon as possible.

Regardless of where a fracture is located, X-rays are needed to determine the severity of the break and the number of bone fragments that are present. These factors are crucial in determining which options are available in caring for the break. Depending on the location, bones that are cracked but not displaced can be splinted. More serious fractures require pinning, bone plating, or external fixation. In circumstances where bones are crushed or economics prevent proper treatment, your vet may recommend limb amputation.

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