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Gun Dog First Aid Kit

Traumatic injuries are the most common maladies that occur to hunting dogs. A good first aid kit is a necessity in order to properly care for these wounds and to prevent further pain and injury. This allows the injury to be stabilized until a more definitive treatment can be performed by a veterinarian. The following list is rather simplistic, but is very effective in stabilizing most injuries encountered out in the field.

1. Thermometer – get the digital, easy to read ones available almost anywhere. A dog's temperature is important in numerous situations, with normal ranging roughly from 101-102.5 °F
2. 4 x 4 Gauze Sponges – these are used to blot up blood from wounds, and can be used with triple-antibiotic ointment as a protective covering for various wounds.
3. Surgical Soap – This is used to scrub wounds, especially before closing or placing a covering on them.
4. Vetwrap – can have various uses, but is a good choice for the final covering of a bandage. I would get the two inch variety.
5. 1" Tape – numerous uses, but primarily as a final covering to hold bandage material in place and to keep dirt and debris out of the wound.
6. Triple Antibiotic Ointment – this can be used as to cover wounds before placing a bandage. If a wound appears infected it likely will need addressing by a veterinarian and oral antibiotics.
7. Cotton Swabs – preferably ones with long sticks, these can be used to clean wounds and also to clean material out of the ear. Caution should be used not to lodge the material further down the ear, though.
8. Staple Gun – This is used for wound closure. Be sure to get correct instructions on when and how to use. If the wound is severe this may only provide temporary closure until it can be evaluated by a veterinarian.
9. Tissue Glue – Use this for simple cuts and wounds. It can also be used on broken nails or split foot pads.
10. Hemostats/Needle Nose Pliers – can be used to stop major bleeding, although care should be given if unsure of where the blood is coming from and also of grasping the wrong tissue. They also can be used to pull quills. Use the hemostats for delicate jobs and the pliers for heavy-duty things.
11. Clean white T-Shirt – These work good for packing off major wounds or open body cavities.
12. Saline Eye Wash – I keep 1-2 bottles of this handy at all times. It can be used to wash foreign material from the eye or nose and also doubles as an excellent choice to flush wounds.
13. Antibiotic Eye Ointment – talk with your veterinarian about this one, but one without cortisone is the best choice.
14. 50 % Dextrose or Sugar Source (KARO Syrup) – Use either of these to rub on the gums of a dog that you suspect from exertional hypoglycemia (low-blood sugar).
15. Container (preferably water-tight) – this allows all the materials to be kept in one secure place.
16. If you have extra room I would also add in items like nail clippers, rolled gauze, bandage scissors and any other convenient tools. Also if your dog is on any prescription medications I would carry a few extra doses in the kit.

This is a fairly basic first aid kit, and most of the items can be obtained from your veterinarian, pharmacist, or your favorite bargain store. The biggest thing to remember is that most emergency situations have the potential to become worse if you don't stop and think for a minute. It's best to keep both the dog and yourself calm and make rational decisions. Stabilize the injury or wound, stop any bleeding, keep the dog calm, quiet and comfortable and seek veterinary care as quickly as possible.