

# VETERINARY SKILLS FOR YOUTH

Two steps in caring for your goat.

1. Keep your goat healthy – health maintenance, nutrition, general care.
2. Knowing when your goat is sick.

## KEEPING YOUR GOAT HEALTHY

To keep your goat healthy you need to:

1. Be sure the goat has the proper nutrition for its production and lumbar score.
  2. Know its lumbar score.
  3. Keep up with general health care maintenance for your goat.
  4. Good home environment.
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1. Nutrition – the feeding regimen that includes supplements that you give your goat in relation to its production and lumbar score.
  2. Lumbar score – a body scoring system that lets you know if your goat is too fat or too skinny.
  3. General health care maintenance is an ongoing regimen to keep your goat healthy.
  4. The goat's home environment includes a good shelter and safe enclosure.

## KNOWING WHEN YOUR GOAT IS SICK

To be able to know when you have a sick goat you must know your goat's normal. A goat's normal includes;

1. Attitude
2. Temperature
3. Respirations
4. Mucous membranes
5. Rumination rate
6. Eyes
7. Stool and urine
8. Skin and hair coat
9. Musculoskeletal

The sooner you know that your goat is ill the sooner you can start treatment.

Having a first aid kit at home will also help you care for your goat. Depending on how knowledgeable you are in goat care or if you have someone you can call that is very

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knowledgeable about goat care, you may be able to treat your goat yourself. But, if you need help or are unsure about the goat's problem calling your veterinarian is of utmost importance. Before you call your veterinarian you will need to have some information for them. This includes age, gender, temperature, of your goat. Specifics about what's abnormal, not eating, not getting up, neurological sign, eye discharge, grinding teeth, anything unusual.

### WHEN TO CALL THE VETERINARIAN:

It is always a good idea to know your veterinarian before you have an emergency and have their phone number available. This may mean just a phone call to your local veterinarian's clinic and getting set up as a customer or you may need to bring your goat in for a check up to set you up as a customer. Regardless what ever is needed, it is a good idea that your veterinarian knows you and your goat before there is an emergency. With veterinarians being so busy at times that they may not be able to see your goat or answer your questions as soon as you would like. It is a good idea to know the symptoms of some goat problems so that you can at least start some type of therapy for it while you wait for your veterinarian to call you or see the goat. You may even feel confident enough in you knowledge of goat care to treat your goat yourself. Most veterinarians welcome questions via phone, and although they could not give you an accurate diagnosis with out seeing the goat and possibly running some tests, they might be able to tell you if what you are doing for the goat may help or not. You will need to be the person to make the decision about calling the veterinarian. If you have access to a knowledgeable goat person you should have their phone number available to ask them questions also.

Some examples of emergencies when you might want to consult your veterinarian if you do not feel confident in treating these your self or do not know how to treat them:

1. Goat eats rhododendron or azalea leaves
2. Not getting up
3. Won't eat
4. Kid with green diarrhea
5. Temperature higher than 102.5
6. Limping
7. Kidding problems
8. Doe who has just kidded and won't get up
9. Dow who is within a few weeks of kidding and goes off food, stops drinking, stays down – probable ketosis – needs veterinarian care immediately
10. Kid with bloat – gas filled rumen that can not escape, this is an emergent situation, life threatening.
11. Grinding teeth
12. Neurological symptoms such as head turned towards back, seizures

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### 13. Eye discharge, swelling or cloudiness

#### **BOTTOM LINE ITEMS FOR YOUR FIRST AID SHELF**

Mineral oil – this is human mineral oil type, for bloat and constipation

Pepto Bismol – to treat diarrhea

Probiotic – yogurt, powder or gel

Penicillin – it's the middle of the night and your goat has a fever, start this and it may save the goats life

Aspirin – human type is fine, can drop a fever

Electrolytes – Pedialyte type, Gatorade type, if goat is dehydrated, these work well

CDT – this injection should be given as a booster anytime a kid goat is stressed CDT (Clostridium, overeating disease prevention) as well as if a goat gets a deep cut or wound (tetanus prevention).

Milk of Magnesia or Ipecac – used for poisoning. If a goat has eaten Rhododendrons and you do not have either of these items your goat may not survive depending on how old the goat is and how much of a poison it has eaten. Both are available at your local drug stores. The mild of magnesia coats the intestines and rumen and pushes item out (may cause diarrhea). The Ipecac will cause vomiting of the toxic substances. We usually try not to make the goat vomit as this usually ends up in pneumonia, but if necessary it is better to have to treat a goat for pneumonia than not have the goat live.

Goat drencher – dosing gun or large syringe (for adult goats) and small syringe for kid goats. You can purchase a specialized dosing gun or you can use a turkey baster or large syringe for adult goats. For kid goats the dosing gun also works but for small kid goats using a combination of short length (4 inches or so) of aquarium air tubing placed on the end of a small 6cc syringe makes an excellent “drencher”.

These items above will usually get your goat through the night until you can either reach a veterinarian or perhaps figure out what's going on yourself. Sometimes your veterinarian cannot be reached at night so being able to get your goat through the night yourself is sometimes a “saving grace”.