

WHAT YOU SHOULD DO IMMEDIATELY: SEEK VETERINARY ATTENTION

Cat owners should consider any fracture as a medical emergency that requires immediate veterinary attention, says Dr. Ursula Krotscheck. “Don’t attempt any first aid,” she advises. “Don’t try to bandage the wounded area or try to strap the animal to a board. And don’t try to ice the wound — stressed cats don’t like to be touched — and you’re apt to be bitten or scratched. Simply put the animal in its carrier, call the veterinarian to say that you’re on your way, and get to the clinic as soon as possible.”

At the clinic, a fracture — or at least the area of injury — is likely to be clearly apparent. Nevertheless, an experienced veterinarian will postpone repairing the injury pending a period of observation and a series of laboratory tests for a minimum of 12 hours and possibly two or three days, during which time the cat will be given pain-killing medications. “Before any type of surgery is done,” says Dr. Krotscheck, “we want to make sure that the animal hasn’t experienced any other kind of trauma — to its lungs or heart, for example — that would put it at risk under anesthesia.”

The observation period will also serve to give the animal some sorely needed rest, she points out. A cat that has just fallen from a tree or been struck by a car needs time for its body to recover from the trauma.

