

# Pig Emergency Response Guide

## Recognizing and Understanding Critical Health Issues

Pigs are hardy animals, but when they get sick, they can decline rapidly. **If your pig shows any of the signs below, call a veterinarian immediately.**

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### 1. Heat Stroke (Hyperthermia)

Pigs have very few sweat glands and cannot pant effectively to cool down.

- **Signs:** Rapid, shallow breathing (panting); thick saliva/drooling; red or blue skin; glassy eyes; lying down and refusing to move; convulsions or collapse.
- **Why it Happens:** Exposure to direct sun without shade, confinement in a hot vehicle or unventilated shed, or overexertion during hot, humid weather.

### 2. Digestive Obstruction ("Blockage")

Pigs are notorious for eating things they shouldn't.

- **Signs:** Repeated vomiting; refusing food and water; straining to defecate with no results; extreme abdominal pain (grunting, grinding teeth, rolling).
- **Why it Happens:** Eating foreign objects (rocks, toys, fencing), eating large amounts of fibrous material (hair, bedding), or severe constipation.

### 3. Gastric Torsion (Bloat)

This is a fatal emergency where the stomach twists on itself.

- **Signs:** Sudden, severe swelling on the left side of the belly; extreme distress; rapid breathing; inability to lie down; unproductive vomiting.
- **Why it Happens:** Often follows a large meal, especially if the pig gorges on fermented feed, rich food, or drinks excessive water immediately after eating.

### 4. Salt Toxicity (Water Deprivation)

Excess salt consumption without adequate water leads to brain swelling.

- **Signs: Walking in circles**, pressing head against walls, blindness, shaking/tremors, seizures, and acting drunk or uncoordinated.
- **Why it Happens:** The water supply has frozen, broken, or run dry, while the pig continues to eat salty food (kitchen scraps, commercial feed). *Note: Sudden rehydration can make this worse; call a vet for the correct rehydration protocol.*

## 5. Acute Toxicity (Poisoning)

Pigs are foragers and highly sensitive to various toxins.

- **Signs:** Sudden vomiting; diarrhea (sometimes bloody); neurological signs (tremors, seizures); rapid heart rate; weakness or sudden death.
- **Why it Happens:** Ingesting toxic plants (ferns, oleander, nightshade), chemical fertilizers, pesticides, rat poison, or moldy feed.

## 6. Severe Injury & Uncontrollable Bleeding

Pigs can be injured during fighting, handling, or accidents.

- **Signs:** Deep lacerations; arterial bleeding (spurting red blood); inability to stand (lameness); dangling limbs (fracture).
- **Why it Happens:** Fighting with other pigs, getting caught on fencing, or falls.

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### Immediate Action Checklist

1. **Stay Calm:** Pigs panic easily, which worsens conditions like heat stroke.
2. **Call the Vet:** Do not wait to see if symptoms improve.
3. **Isolate the Pig:** Move the pig to a quiet, cool, shaded area.
4. **Do NOT Induce Vomiting:** Unless specifically directed by a veterinarian, as this can cause choking or esophageal damage.

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*Disclaimer: This guide is for informational purposes only and does not replace professional veterinary advice.*