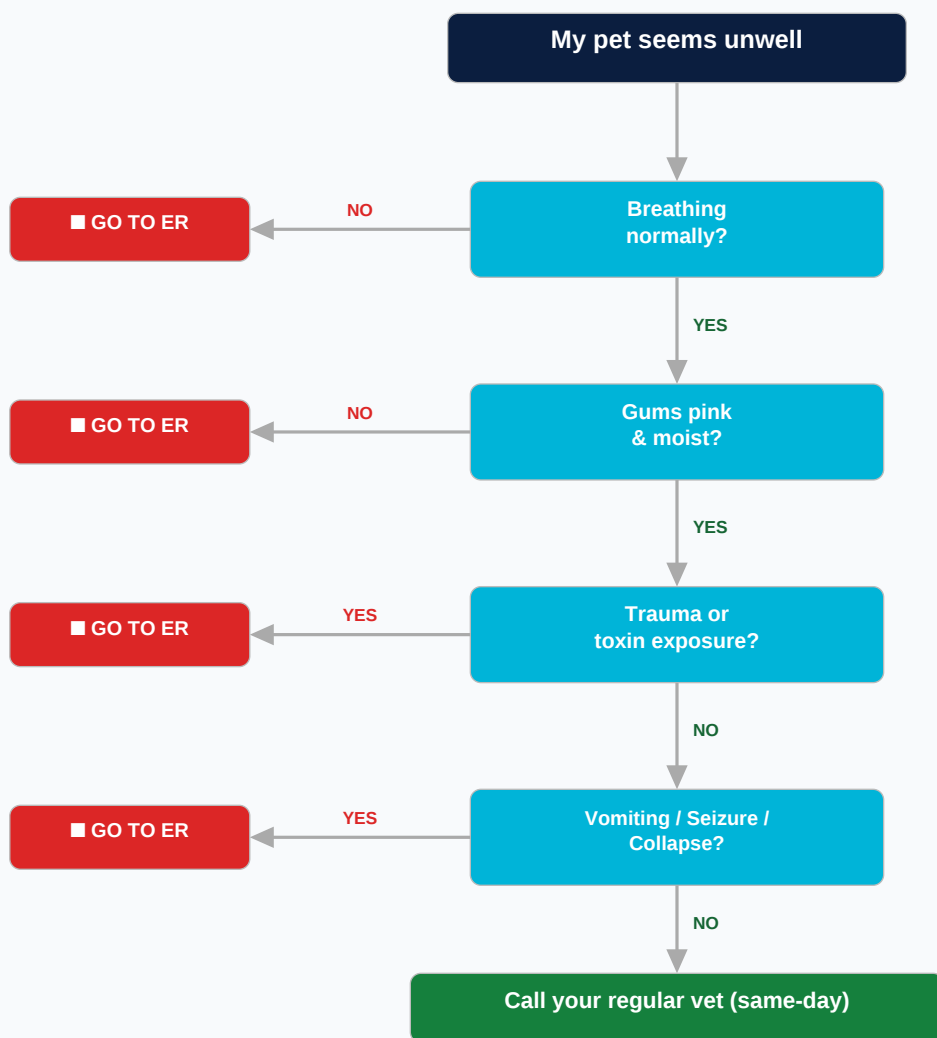




Overview

Use this decision tree to quickly assess whether your pet's situation requires immediate emergency care. When in doubt at any step, choose the ER. This tool supplements — but does not replace — your judgment and your vet's guidance.

■ ■ This tree covers the most common emergency indicators. It does not cover every possible situation. If something feels wrong, go to the ER regardless of this chart.



When in doubt at ANY step — choose the ER.

■ ■ Still have questions or want a second opinion? Email Xavier's Veterinary Care — we're here to help you think it through, whether it's urgent, a follow-up, or just something that doesn't feel right.



■ Always Go to the ER — No Questions Asked

The following situations always warrant the emergency vet, regardless of the decision tree:

- Any breathing difficulty
- Suspected poisoning or toxin ingestion
- Uncontrolled bleeding
- Hit by car or significant trauma
- Collapse or loss of consciousness
- Seizures
- Blue, white, gray, or yellow gums
- Male cat not urinating
- Distended abdomen with unproductive retching (GDV — dogs)
- Eye prolapse

■ The Bottom Line

■ **THIS IS A VETERINARY EMERGENCY — GO NOW.** If your pet is showing any of the signs described in this guide, stop reading and drive directly to your nearest 24-hour emergency vet. Do not wait until morning. Do not call first. **Go immediately.**

■ Related XVC Guides:

- [When to Go to the Emergency Vet](#) · [Pet First Aid Guide](#)
- [NYC Emergency Vet Hospitals](#) · [Pet CPR Basics](#)



This resource may be shared for personal, educational, or non-commercial use provided it remains unmodified and Xavier's Veterinary Care is credited as the original source. Commercial reproduction or resale without written permission is prohibited. For diagnosis & prescriptions, consult a licensed veterinarian.
© 2026 Xavier's Veterinary Care.