



When a dog or cat breaks a nail and the quick (or blood vessel) is exposed, the resultant bleeding can seem like a lot! It can also be quite painful, similar to when a human breaks a nail below the nail bed. The first thing you can do at home is to apply a temporary bandage to the area to contain the bleeding. This can be as simple as a paper towel underneath an ace bandage. The point of the bandage is to contain the bleeding while you transport your dog to a veterinary clinic. Cat paws and small dog paws can be harder to bandage, so it may be best to leave the nail unbandaged and put the pet in a carrier.

The veterinarian will often recommend a short-acting sedative while the part of the nail that is still hanging on is trimmed and the quick cauterized, as this can be painful. After that, a bandage may be applied. Depending on the circumstances, antibiotics and/or pain medication may be prescribed.

Your pet should be much more comfortable after having the broken nail trimmed and cauterized. The nail will usually grow back, unless the break was very low. Sometimes the nail will grow back crooked.

If you choose to treat a broken nail at home, you can try styptic powder, which is available at pet stores, to stop the bleeding. We do not recommend home bandaging, except to keep your car clean while transporting to the vet for care. The reason home bandaging is not recommended is that an improperly applied bandage can cause permanent damage to your pet's leg.