

What is triage? Triage is Gulf Coast Veterinary Specialists' rapid system for evaluating and prioritizing pet care in emergencies, similar to how human ERs operate. Derived from the French verb "trier," meaning "to sort," it helps us quickly identify life-threatening issues. We prioritize the most critical cases to ensure they receive immediate attention.

What happens during the initial triage? The triage nurse will ask about your pet's main issue, onset time, and brief medical history. Then, they will check vital signs like mental state, temperature, heart rate, and more. Based on this assessment, a triage score determines how urgently your pet needs care.

TRIAGE CLASSIFICATION	DESCRIPTION	EXAMPLES*
First Priority	<u>Patient Critical</u> Treatment must be initiated immediately	Cardiopulmonary arrest, labored breathing, active seizures, severe bleeding, severe trauma, GDV/"bloat," collapse/shock, unconsciousness, some toxin ingest
Second Priority	<u>Patient Urgent</u> Currently stable, but may become first priority patient, will need to be reassessed, or have treatment initiated within minutes to hours	Anorexic puppies or kittens, minor trauma, some toxin ingest, pale gums, historical collapse, inability to urinate
Third Priority	<u>Patient Stable</u> Pressing problem that is non critical, treatment initiated within hours	Vomiting, diarrhea, blood in urine, broken bone(s), fever
Fourth Priority	<u>Patient Completely Stable</u> Needs evaluation, requires action within the next 24+ hours	Lameness, skin rash, ear infection, ocular discharge

*These examples may not cover all situations. Medical conditions can change quickly, and priorities may vary based on various factors.

What does it mean if my pet is waiting? Please be assured that we are constantly monitoring all pets that are in the triage queue. If your pet is stable and remains stable, the wait may be longer. We strive to see patients promptly but can't always provide a exact wait times due to the unexpected nature of emergencies.