

Recognising a sick koala and calling for rescue



Koalas need to be rescued and taken into care if they have signs of injury or disease, are orphaned, or are in an unsuitable environment, eg where there are no food trees.

A healthy koala should have a pink chin, a dry white rump, no discharge from the eyes, ears, nose or mouth, and not be bleeding or limping.

Sick koalas often come to the ground and sit hunched over at the base of a tree or stay low in a tree for long periods (for days). Koalas should naturally move away from humans, not allowing themselves to be touched or petted.

Koalas can climb even with fractured/broken bones while adrenaline is running. If a koala has been seen to be hit by a car or bitten by a dog, do not let it climb up and get away before it can be rescued.

A dog bite can be fatal if the wound is not cleaned and antibiotics given to prevent infection.

Koalas do not bleed profusely, so the wound/s may not be obvious. Deadly but invisible internal wounds can be caused if the koala is picked up and shaken by a dog.

Chlamydia is the most common disease in koalas. It can be fatal if not treated with antibiotics. Two signs of chlamydia, indicating that treatment is necessary are:

- If the koala's rump is wet and stained dark brown/black due to 'wet bottom'.
- If the koala's eyes are crusty or gunky with pus, or red and inflamed.

If a rescue is needed, or you need help in determining this, please call the **Port Stephens Koala Hospital** rescue number immediately, at any time of the day or night.

1800 PS Koalas / 1800 775 625

To keep a sick or injured koala calm, cover it with a laundry basket, box or even a large towel or blanket, or jacket. If the koala is not contained, only covered, it will escape easily if you don't keep pressure on the container to secure it. Do not leave it alone.

Do not attempt to pick a koala up and hold them like a child. Wild koalas bite hard and their long claws scratch deeply.

Put the koala in a quiet place, away from pets (dogs especially), noisy people and machinery, if possible, while you wait for the rescuer to arrive.



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