

Cat Poisoning



Permethrin toxicity remains one of the most common causes of poisoning in cats, and yet many owners don't know what it is. **Permethrin is an insecticide commonly found in over the counter 'spot-on' flea treatments for dogs as well as some shampoos and household flea products.**

In most mammals, permethrin has a good level of safety, but for some unknown reason when it comes to cats it's highly toxic, which means it's important that pet owners who own both cats and dogs understand the dangers of permethrin to a cat.

Cats are most commonly poisoned after their owners mistakenly use a dog product on the cat, but they can also show mild signs after close contact with a recently treated dog.

Signs of poisoning

Signs usually develop within a few hours, although they can sometimes be delayed by up to 72 hours. It can often take 2-3 days for the signs to improve.

The effects of insecticide poisoning in mild intoxications include; paraesthesia (pins and needles) caused by direct contact with permethrin, which may result in paw flicking, ear twitching and uncontrollable contractions of the cutaneous trunk muscles.

If your cat begins grooming the contaminated area, you may notice hypersalivation and vomiting. In cases of severe intoxications severe muscle tremors, seizures and / or depression may be present.

Treatment

If you think your cat has come into contact with the substance, it's important you that any remaining product should be washed from your cat's hair coat (or clipped in long haired cats) using cool water, NOT warm water as this will increase absorption of the product. Controlling the convulsions is often difficult, and your cat may need to be hospitalised for several days.

The [Veterinary Poisons Information Service](#) reports that 15% of cases of insecticide poisoning result in death or euthanasia.

However, cats that receive immediate treatment typically survive and usually suffer no long-term effects.

Prevention

If you do own both cats and dogs, the easiest way to prevent any kind of permethrin dangers is to only use licensed flea treatments on your cat, but also check your dog's flea treatments to make sure it doesn't contain the substance.

Household treatments such as flea sprays may also contain permethrin, therefore check the label before spraying around your home, if you're still unsure- talk to your vet about which products can be safely used.

If you do need to use a flea treatment on your dog that contains permethrin, the safest option is to keep yours pets apart until the dog's treatment has dried. This is to prevent mutual grooming, which could result in poisoning if your cat became exposed to sufficient product. There may be advice on this situation on the packaging of the dog product.

If you suspect your cat has been poisoned, please get in touch.