

Elburn Animal Hospital Newsletter

March 2019

Welcome

The countdown to spring begins!! I think we'll all be glad to see winter behind us. March 17 - 25 is "Poison Prevention Week", so in reference to this we will be discussing Marijuana toxicosis in animals and also "Are essential oils bad for pets". If you have any questions or comments or have a topic you would like to hear about please contact our staff at 630-365-9599 or you can contact us via email: 3lburn@sbcglobal.net

Marijuana Toxicosis in Animals

In 2019, with more states legalizing marijuana, the ASPCA noted a large jump in the number of calls regarding marijuana ingestion by animals.

The increase in popularity of marijuana edibles has made it more enticing to dogs, since they often smell and taste like regular baked goods. Cats are however more attracted to marijuana in its bud form.

Exposures in indirect ways have also been reported, such as careless disposal or storage of marijuana or remnants in public locations.



Signs of exposure

Signs that an animal has been exposed to marijuana generally include depression, lethargy, ataxia (loss of coordination or involuntary movements of muscles or eyes), agitation, dilated pupils, unusually fast or slow heart rate, low body temperature and urinary incontinence. Pets exposed to marijuana may also show other signs such as seizures and coma, although not as common.

Treatment for marijuana is usually symptomatic.

Fortunately, most marijuana exposures are not serious. Veterinarians should attempt to obtain information regarding how much, as well as what form was ingested. The veterinarian will consider the pet's current physical findings to make the best judgement on what may or may not be needed for the patient. Home monitoring may be feasible in some cases; however, young and /or small patients may have more problems with hypothermia and would need to stay in the hospital



Are essential oils dangerous for pets?

Essential oils have been used for centuries for maladies such as nasal congestion, anxiety, sore muscles and more. With the popularity of oil diffusers there is more concern about how oils may affect animals.

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Essential oils are the natural aromatic compounds that give plants their individual scents. The oils are extracted from plants and distilled, and their uses and health benefits are wide ranging.

They can be used to make your house smell better, repel mosquitos, improve sleep, boost moods or even help alleviate nausea. For pets, they are most commonly used for repelling fleas and helping with separation anxiety.

Are essential oils toxic?

There is no simple yes or no answer to this question since various factors come into play.

First, there is variability with the toxicities of different oil types. Second, the oils can be found in a wide range of concentrations.

Products containing essential oils such as fragrances, shampoos and medicinal products – often contain 1 – 20% essential oils. However, there has been an increase in popularity of more concentrated essential oils, some going as high as 100%.

A third factor is species sensitivity.

For example, cats are more sensitive with dermal exposure due to their increased risk of oral exposure from grooming.

Make sure to never use tea tree oil around cats!

The same concern applies to pets such as rabbits, guinea pigs, and hamsters.

Birds are more likely to suffer respiratory affects than other animals to a diffuser due to their specialized respiratory system.

Animals with underlying health issues may also be at higher risk if they are unable to metabolize the oil, have respiratory disorders, or have broken skin which can allow increased absorption of dermally applied essential oils.



What symptoms should you look for?

The most common clinical signs with dermal exposure include ataxia, muscle weakness, depression and behavior changes. In severe cases hypothermia and collapse may occur. With oral exposure, vomiting, diarrhea, and central nervous system depression can be seen.

In severe cases, seizures and rarely liver injury has been reported with pennyroyal and malaleuca oils. If inhaled, aspiration pneumonia may occur.

It is best not to give highly concentrated oils to pets. If a pet has an underlying health problem, particularly a respiratory issue, it would be best to avoid the use of essential oils diffusers in the household all together.

Do not use essential oils diffusers in the house if there are birds present.

If using a diffuser or warmer make sure they are out of the reach of pets and that pets can leave the area if the smell is getting too strong for them.

Don't keep a diffuser in the same room (or use a strong concentration) as animals who groom themselves.

Most Common St. Patrick's Day Toxins

Alcohol – Many dogs and some cats will

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happily lap up beer that is left within reach, and St. Patty's Day parties are a very common time for pets to get into unattended drinks.

The onset of affects with alcohol is typically fast, so the opportunity for vomiting with alcohol is often short and is not recommended in symptomatic pets.

Ethanol intoxication can cause ataxia, depression, recumbency, hypothermia, disorientation, vocalization, increased heart rate, difficult or labored breathing aspiration pneumonia, tremors, coma and seizures.



The Dangers of Pets and Alcohol

Shamrocks

Oxalis acetosella is typically the plant in question.

The toxic principle of Oxalis is oxalates. The majority of the oxalates are insoluble calcium oxalate crystals, which act locally to irritate the mucous membranes. These crystals can cause oral pain, hypersalivation, vomiting, diarrhea and or swelling of the oral cavity, pharynx and tongue.

Some of the oxalates present within the plant are soluble. Soluble oxalates freely enter the bloodstream and combine with calcium, which can cause hypocalcemia. You may see vomiting, ataxia, weakness, panting, facial rubbing, muscle twitching and seizures. Renal damage due to both the calcium oxalate crystal formation and direct cellular and vascular damage of the oxalates.

Despite how scary this sounds, most companion animals are unable to get into

a large enough amount of plant material to cause systemic signs. Many pets that ingest a small amount of plant material can be monitored at home: pets that ingest larger amounts of plant material and are at risk of hypocalcemia may need induced vomiting and/or monitoring at the hospital.



5 Signs your pet ingested ice melt

Winter is almost over, but in Chicagoland, anything goes, so thought I would include this, good information to have!

While ice melt is important to our safety, it can mean health issues for dogs and cats.

The biggest pet health danger is ingestion of the ice melt salt, either while outside or after a walk when pets clean their paws. Additionally, walking on small rocks of salt can cause paw irritation, especially if the paws are dry and cracked due to the cold winter air.

The main chemical found in most salts and ice melts is chloride. Sodium chloride, potassium chloride, and magnesium chloride are often found in ice melts and should not be ingested by pets.

The five signs and symptoms to watch for are as follows:

- 1) Increased urination

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- 2) Nausea and gastrointestinal upset
- 3) Drastic drop in blood pressure
- 4) Body and muscle weakness
- 5) Neurological issues

Also, calcium carbonate, calcium magnesium acetate, and urea are other dangerous chemicals found in deicers, which can cause vomiting, eye irritation, hyper salivation and abdominal pain.

Ice melt packaging doesn't always list ingredients, and you don't know what your neighbors are using, so to avoid dog and cat health care issues from ingestion of chemicals that trail inside your home. Paws and shoes should always be wiped off when entering the house.

There are some ice melts that are safe for pets in most home improvement stores and hardware stores. They typically cost a little more, but it is important to keep your pets safe!



If you have any questions or comments, please email us at 31burn@sbcglobal.net or call 630-365-9599! If you have a subject you would like covered in our newsletter please let us know!