



COMMON FELINE POISONS & TOXINS

It is often thought that because cats are fussy eaters, they are less easily poisoned than dogs, however, due to their curious nature and fastidious grooming habits, intoxication by ingestion of a substance is not that uncommon. Cats with outdoor access, may also hunt prey that has itself ingested a poison such as rat bait. Cats also have a limited ability to metabolise many toxins and drugs, and as such the toxic dose of a compound is often low. Some of the commonly seen toxins are described below.

LILIES

Plants of the *Lillium species* ("True Lilies") and *Heimerocallis* ("Day Lilies") are highly toxic to cats. All parts of the plant are poisonous – LEAVES, FLOWERS AND POLLEN – and can cause a potentially fatal acute kidney failure. Immediate treatment is essential to stand a chance of reversing the damage to the kidneys. Less than one leaf ingested by a cat can cause kidney failure.

ANTIFREEZE

Ethylene Glycol is a common component of antifreeze, de-icer and screen-wash products, and is highly toxic to cats. Many animals find antifreeze sweet-tasting, and may ingest it from spillages/leaks etc. or by grooming their feet after walking through some liquid. Ingestion of even a tiny amount can cause acute kidney failure and death in cats.

DOG FLEA TREATMENT PRODUCTS

Permethrin is found in many spot-on preparations for dogs used for controlling fleas and lice, and also in some ant powders. Poisoning occurs when cats are accidentally treated with such products or groom other animals treated with them. Permethrin is highly neurotoxic to cats, causing seizures, and immediate treatment is essential. Please ensure you only use flea control products intended for cats, ideally under veterinary prescription.

PESTICIDES

Rodenticides are commonly used in and around homes, farms and industrial premises. Cats may eat the bait that has been left down for rodents, or more commonly, eat a poisoned rodent. Rodenticides cause vitamin K deficiency, causing blood clotting disorders and fatal internal bleeding. Other pesticides such as *insecticides (organophosphates)* and *slug bait (metaldehyde)*, can also be toxic to cats.



Stanhope Park Veterinary Hospital



PARACETAMOL

Paracetamol is often given to cats by owners in a misguided attempt to relieve pain. Cats lack the enzyme required to metabolise paracetamol efficiently, and can lead to a haemolytic anaemia and liver failure. Just one tablet is enough to cause severe illness or death. Only ever give medication to your cat that has been prescribed by your vet.

CLEANING PRODUCTS

Some cleaning products such as **bleach** and **phenolic disinfectants** (*turn milky in water, e.g. "Dettol"*), are toxic to cats. Other products such as concentrated washing liquids and powders can burn the feet and skin if the cat walks through them.

ONIONS & GARLIC

Onions and **garlic** can interfere with cats' red blood cells, inducing a haemolytic anaemia. When tempting an inappetent cat to eat, avoid foods containing garlic or onions, and be aware that baby foods often have a high onion content as a flavour substitute for salt.

Signs of poisoning can be very variable depending on the toxin concerned, and in many cases prompt veterinary treatment is essential.

If you are concerned that your cat may have been poisoned, please call the surgery immediately, and bring any relevant product packaging to the surgery if possible.

If you have any questions about your pets, call us on 01325 620968 or ask a member of our team