



# Snippets

## Small animal newsletter

Issue 27

Autumn 2016

Hello and welcome to our autumn edition of Snippets! In this issue we focus on poisonings as we have had a few cases recently and thought we should warn you about potential dangers.

## Blue-Green Algae

Over the summer months and especially at the end of summer when we have reduced rainfall and prolonged sunshine hours, blue-green algae can appear in rivers and lakes. The algae can then form blooms in lakes or thick mats or 'rafts' attached to river and stream beds. In the past few summers the Waimea river in particular has been a problem with some reported poisonings of dogs swimming in and or drinking the river water.



### What risk do the cyanobacterial mats/toxin-producing blue-green algae pose to stock and domestic pets?

Dogs are particularly susceptible to poisoning from mat-forming blue-green algae as they enjoy being in the water and can consume these mats intentionally or by accident.

Livestock are also at risk from poisoning from cyanotoxins and should be provided with alternative drinking water.

Symptoms of poisoning in animals include; lethargy, muscle tremors, fast breathing, twitching, paralysis, convulsions. In extreme cases death can occur within 30 minutes after signs first appear.

### Who should I call if I think my animal is sick?

If you are concerned about your animals, you should contact a veterinarian immediately. You or your vet should report any animal illness resulting from contact with the blue-green algae to your local council.

### Is it safe to drink water containing toxin-producing blue-green algae?

No. Toxins are not removed by boiling, normal filter systems, or by adding household disinfectant.

### Is it safe to swim in water with toxin-producing blue-green algae?

No. You should avoid any skin contact with the water and avoid swallowing the water.

The higher the concentration of blue-green algae and cyanotoxins and the longer time in the water, the more severe the symptoms are likely to be.



# Anti-Freeze Poisoning In Cats

During the winter we try to prevent water freezing by using ethylene glycol, otherwise known as antifreeze, in car radiators and in some screen washes and de-icers. Every year many cats die because they have been poisoned by this chemical.

**Prompt treatment is the only way for cats to survive poisoning with ethylene glycol.**



## How are cats exposed to ethylene glycol?

Dogs and children are said to be attracted by ethylene glycol's sweet taste. Cats do not taste 'sweetness' in the same way, but it does appear to be attractive to cats for some reason. Cats only need to drink a teaspoon or less of antifreeze for it to cause serious illness and even death. So a curious lick or two from a bottle, or from a spillage, could be enough to cause big problems for the cat. Antifreeze tends to be found in garages or on drives, where it may be stored incorrectly or spilled while pouring into a car radiator, or it could be left in a shallow tray after a car radiator has been drained. A cat walking through a puddle of antifreeze will groom its coat or paws and ingest the poison this way. Ethylene glycol may also be used in garden water features to prevent them freezing up, and unfortunately this can also be drunk by a thirsty cat.

## What signs of poisoning do cats show?

A cat may not show any signs of poisoning for about half an hour after ingesting ethylene glycol. It may then start to show signs such as sickness, a wobbly gait (appearing 'drunk'), weakness and tiredness. As kidney damage develops, cats may also drink and urinate a lot and become very unwell, even collapsing. Blood and urine samples taken by the vet will show abnormalities consistent with ethylene glycol toxicity such as kidney damage and certain crystals in the urine.

## How can I prevent my cat being poisoned with ethylene glycol?

If you have any products containing ethylene glycol such as antifreeze, make sure you store them safely away from children and animals. Use screen wash and de-icer sprays that do not contain ethylene glycol. If a car radiator has been drained and a splash of antifreeze remains on the floor, wipe it up completely and rinse the area thoroughly with water. Remember even a tiny amount on a cat's feet (picked up if it walks through a spillage) is enough to harm it. If you think your cat has been exposed at all, on the coat or feet or by lapping up water containing ethylene glycol, contact your vet immediately.



# RAT BAIT POISONING

Its that time of year when rats and mice start migrating into buildings to seek warmth and store winter food. Many people will lay poisonous baits, and unfortunately these are often eaten by dogs.

We urge you to **use a proper bait station which is pet-proof**, and secure the storage place. Most baits act by stopping the blood from clotting, leading the animal to bleed to death. Secondary poisoning from eating dead rats and mice is unusual as the number required to cause illness is large compared with direct ingestion of the poison.

The symptoms vary depending on where the bleeding is occurring:

- There may be blood in the urine or faeces
- Blood in the saliva or small haemorrhages in the gums
- Rapid breathing or a cough due to haemorrhage in the lungs
- Lethargy or poor exercise tolerance



If you suspect your pet has eaten bait, it is important to see a vet as soon as possible to induce vomiting with medication, then further treatment is usually needed. Don't delay, call the clinic ASAP!

# Slug and Snail Bait Poisoning In Dogs

Slug and snail bait are commonly used in home gardens and are often formed into pellets which are flavoured to attract slugs and snails. Unfortunately they also attract dogs, and occasionally cats. Some products have bittering agents added to try and make them less palatable to dogs, however many dogs still eat them. Poisonings will occur when dogs eat the bait that has been sprinkled on the garden or when the box has been left in reach.

**Slug bait poisoning is extremely serious and can be fatal!**

**Signs of poisoning include:**

- \* Racing heart
- \* Anxiety (restlessness, twitching)
- \* Panting
- \* Salivation
- \* Incoordination
- \* Vomiting and/or diarrhoea
- \* Seizures



**Treatment:**

Call us immediately if you suspect slug bait poisoning. There is no direct antidote to the bait. If your dog has just eaten the bait we can induce vomiting which may lessen the effect of the poison. If it has been more than four hours since the bait was eaten inducing vomiting will not help as the poison will have passed through the stomach. Your dog will be put on to intravenous fluids and given medication to decrease anxiety and/or seizures. Even with treatment patients can still die or suffer on going liver problems.

**Prevention:**

Try to use less toxic methods to control slugs and snails in your garden. If you must use poisons then use ones that are less dangerous to dogs such as Quash. Always keep packets (full or empty) away from dogs (and children). Even if you don't have pets yourself your neighbours might!

# REPEAT PRESCRIPTIONS

When your pet is on long term medication ordering those repeat prescriptions ahead of time can sometimes slip off the radar!

To ensure we have your pets medication in stock, please try use our email ([info@tcvet.co.nz](mailto:info@tcvet.co.nz)) or our online form ahead of time with your prescription request.

This will give us a chance to read through your pets records, ensure your pet is still on the correct dose and make sure a revisit or blood test is not due before more medication is dispensed.

All prescriptions require a veterinarians approval, preferably the vet dealing with your animals case. This can take time. Most of our repeat prescriptions patients need an examination every six months to make sure they are still on the appropriate treatment plan. This process will ensure we have the appropriate medication ready for you to ease the process. We appreciate your co-operation.



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## PROMOTIONS IN STORE!



Buy any pack of Advantage, Advocate or Seresto Collar and receive a **FREE** Aerogard roll on insect repellent for the family! (While stocks last).



Buy 1 pack of Nexgard or Frontline or 2 packs of Broadline and receive a **funky carry bag!**

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