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## WHAT CAN YOU DO ABOUT POISONING?

Poisoning is one of the most barbaric and cowardly crimes against animals, causing them extremely painful and agonizing deaths. And it is a source of immense anguish and grief to the people who love them.

Strangely enough hardly any complaints are filed to the police or the municipality, many people believing it is useless to do so and they simply accept it as "a fact of life". The victims might disagree... if they could have their say in it!

Your veterinarian will do all he can to rescue a poisoned animal but often it is impossible to save the animal's life. Therefore it is important to take further action!

The veterinarian can make an anonymous record of the poisoning cases in his clinic to chart the poisoning problem and bring it to the attention of relevant authorities. These are needed as evidence and statistics, so that authorities can no longer pretend the problem does not exist - as they often claim - and to press them to take further action to protect animals. We aim for stricter laws, severe sentences and effective enforcement of the laws.

Sometimes animals, and particularly cats, are poisoned inadvertently by drinking water contaminated with organo-phosphate material or taking poisoned bait left out at night for animals such as rats and polecats.

## FIRST AID PREPARATION

First of all discuss the content and use of a first aid kit with your veterinarian or a qualified pharmacist in the chemist, as emetics and antidotes differ per country. Ask your vet to tell you the symptoms of poisoning by herbicides and pesticides like strychnine, arsenic, paraquat etc. He knows which poisons are used locally, he can explain the symptoms and he can advise on the treatment. Knowing the symptoms is essential as antidotes can be harmful if an animal is not poisoned! Most vets appreciate the fact that first aid by the owner of a poisoned animal is crucial for its survival. Ask your vet to show you how to administer emetics or activated carbon solutions orally and how to handle a syringe in such a case of emergency. Preparation is the first step!

## THE FIRST AID KIT

Carry with you at all times a first aid kit containing emetics (ampoules and/or solutions), activated carbon (tablets or solution), a syringe and antidotes, together with the dosage and administration instructions your vet will recommend. Be aware that dogs and cats need different treatment and that oral treatment of a poisoned animal might be impossible when it has convulsions or is unable to swallow.

## FIRST AID

Warn the veterinarian immediately! When you start first aid let another person phone the veterinarian so he can prepare for the emergency treatment while you are on your way to him.

1. If possible, try to identify the substance ingested before administering the emetics by:

- ? carefully inspecting the surrounding area and
- ? observing the symptoms of the animal.

**WARNING:** You should NOT cause an animal to vomit if it has ingested caustic/acid substances or glass, as this would cause further damage of the internal organs! In that case try to administer activated carbon and leave for the vet immediately.

**WARNING:** If the animal has convulsions do NOT administer anything orally (through the mouth). With swallowing always be very careful in order to avoid aspiration into the lungs.

If it is likely that it has ingested another poison:

2. Make the animal throw up with:

? orally: 30 - 60 cc of diluted hydrogen peroxide (1:10), or  
 ? orally: mustard seeds in lukewarm water, or  
 ? orally: 10% IPECAC SYRUP (10ml per 10kg body weight), or injection:  
 ? APOMORPHINE (0,05mg per kg body weight), CATS REACT VIOLENTLY TO APORMOPHINE, SO ONLY USE IF NOTHING ELSE AVAILABLE - MAKE SURE THE CAT IS CONFINED AND CANNOT INJURE ITSELF OR YOU.

Or

? injection: FILTALON under the skin (large dog 1cc and if it has not vomited after 5 minutes another 1cc)(medium dog 1cc) (very small dog or a cat 0.5cc)

3. Only after it has thrown up:

? Let it swallow active carbon.

? Give it an intramuscular injection of:

- dogs/cats: ATROPINE (0.04mg per kg or 1ml per 10kg), or
- cats: XYLAZINE (0,5-1mg per kg)

4. When finished, keep the animal warm, take the animal to your vet immediately!

N.B.: Beware of overdose!

### POISONING SYMPTOMS

- rat poison (warfarincan): result in vomiting and diarrhoea, but sometimes the animal will display no symptoms at all for two to three days. Patches of red/purple/dark blue on the body or gums begin to develop later. These are signs of internal bleeding. Treatment involves an injection of vitamin K (Konakion) to help clot the blood - between 5mg and 20mg depending on the size and weight of the animal.
- strychnine poisoning: animals that have been poisoned with strychnine go into spasm, their pupils expand and muscles twitch. Treatment is an injection of diazepam (Valium): cats 5-10mg, dogs 10-30mg depending on size and weight.
- insecticide (organo-phosphate) poisoning: salivation, excessive tears, diarrhoea, severe vomiting, constriction of the pupil, muscle twitching, asthmatic breathing, convulsion and coma. Treatment: an injection of atropine (one vial for a cat or small dog, two or three vials for larger dogs depending on their weight). The injection can be intravenous (into the vein - it is absorbed most quickly this way), intramuscular (into the muscle), or subcutaneous (under the skin).

**Report cases of deliberate poisoning to the Police and the municipality.**

**Teach children that poisoning is a terrible and horrible crime.**

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