



Shires Veterinary Practice News

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Common Pet Poisons



At this time of year we start to see an increase in the incidence of pet poisonings. However, do not be alarmed, poisonings are very rare and most pets that have vomiting, diarrhoea or are off colour are not poisoned, they have simply explained illnesses.

Here at Shires we have access to the fantastic services of the VPIS (Veterinary Poisons Information Service) run by Guys & St. Thomas' Hospital in London. They are available 24 hours a day to provide advice to vets on poisons. Most 'poisons' do not have an 'antidote' and require the correct supportive nursing care. Some things are more toxic than most though:

Chocolate: Especially topical at this time of year! Most people are aware that chocolate is toxic to dogs (and cats), but are not sure how much is harmful. It is the theobromine component of chocolate which is toxic, and hence 70% Cocoa solids dark chocolate is the most toxic. As little as 1gram of chocolate per kilogram body-weight can be highly toxic and even fatal. Hence a 10kg dog would only need to eat 10grams of chocolate to suffer serious consequences. Signs of chocolate poisoning include tremors, hyperthermia (high temperature) and even seizures.



Anti-Freeze: The active component Ethylene Glycol in most antifreezes is highly toxic and usually fatal. This is the most common poisoning that we see in cats. Anti-freeze tastes sweet and cats will even seek it out to drink it. The ethylene glycol causes crystals to form in the kidneys which stops them from working.

Immediate treatment could save lives, unfortunately most of these cases are presented when we see signs of the poisoning and treatment is too late. The signs are disorientation, trembling, vast increase in thirst and lack of appetite.

Rat & Mouse Bait: This is still the most common poisoning that we see in dogs, despite most people being aware of the risks. These substances cause the blood to thin and hence cause spontaneous bleeding. Prompt treatment is vital as we can induce vomiting and give drugs to help the blood to clot.



Slug Pellets: Again, we still see poisonings due to slug pellets despite people being aware of the risks. Signs again include trembling, lethargy and fitting. Prompt treatment again is vital as this can save lives.

Lilies: Unfortunately people are still often unaware of the risks of lilies and cats. The Lily pollen is highly toxic to cats and causes acute kidney failure. Cats do not usually eat lilies, however if the stamens are left intact then they will often get the pollen on their coats by brushing past the flowers. The cat then cleans itself and ingests the poison. Signs include the signs of kidney failure including vast increase in thirst, lethargy and lack of appetite. Supportive treatment can often however save the cats life, but long term kidney damage is a real possibility.



Permethrin: This is another of our common poisons. Unfortunately many 'pet shop' flea treatments contain permethrin. This substance is highly toxic to cats and causes fitting. Even a tiny dog dose can prove fatal to cats. The message has to be to check all products carefully for any warnings.

Thankfully, poisonings are rare, however if you suspect that your pet may have ingested a poison then contact us straight away.

Shires Veterinary Practice provides your pet with a complete healthcare service.

Services we offer include:

- Pet Passports
- Preventative health-care including vaccinations, flea and worm treatments
- Daily nurses clinics
- 24 hour 'out of hours' cover.
- In house laboratory
- Full anaesthesia and surgery service
- ECG
- X-ray and ultrasound
- Endoscopy
- Dentistry

For help and advice 24 hours a day, please telephone your nearest branch.

Did you know...

- We run daily nurse clinics from 3-4pm at Stone and Hanley
- We are a Veterinary Nurse Training Practice
- You will always see a dedicated small animal vet out of hours

Daily surgeries at:

Stone:

The Veterinary Surgery, Eccleshall Road,
Walton, Stone, Staffs ST15 0HJ
01785 813955

Eccleshall:

The Veterinary Centre, Stone Road,
Eccleshall, Staffs. ST21
01785 850218

Hanley:

Shires Vets Ltd, 92 Bucknall New Road,
Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent. ST1 2BE
01782 214683

Gnosall:

2A Newport Road, Gnosall, Staffs. ST20
01785 823713

Loggerheads:

Eccleshall Road, Loggerheads, Shropshire. TF9
01630 673568

Please telephone for an appointment

Nurses Clinics

We hold nurses clinics on weekdays 3-4pm at both Stone and Hanley. The nurses are available during these times to discuss any aspects of your pets' care. They also provide:

- Removal of sutures and staples
- Post op checks
- Bandage changes *
- Nail clipping *
- Anal gland emptying *
- Burring of rabbits' front teeth *
- Diet advice
- Weight watchers
- Microchipping*

* - A charge applies to these services.

Please telephone either surgery for more information on our nurses clinics.

Rabbits—Why the Correct Diet is Essential

Most health problems that we see in rabbits are unfortunately caused by incorrect diet. Rabbits are herbivores and need fibre in their diet to maintain their health. Unfortunately most rabbits are being fed incorrectly, leading to painful diseases.

At least 90% of a rabbits diet needs to be long fibre (hay and grazed grass) with a good quality pellet food (such as **Supa-Rabbit Exel**) as a supplement to ensure adequate vitamins and minerals. Coarse mixes (which look like muesli) allow for selective feeding, with rabbits usually eating the tasty high fat bits and leaving the portions with the fibre content and thus are a poor choice.



Hay should really be fed from a hay rack and not as bedding (would you like to eat your bedding?) as it is often contaminated with urine and faeces.



Fresh vegetables are a good idea, but it is important to choose high fibre vegetables such as kale, broccoli, and spring greens, and avoid high sugar fruit and veg such as carrots and apples as these can ferment in the intestines.

The most common problems that we see caused by incorrect diet are:

Dental Disease: Rabbits' teeth grow continuously throughout their lives. They need long fibre to ensure that their teeth wear are the correct rate and in the correct alignment. Rabbits should spend a large proportion of their time chewing!



Intestinal Disease: Whether this is diarrhoea, or gut stasis (where the guts slow down and stop working), the usual cause is a lack of long fibre. Fibre in the diet regulates the intestinal tract and ensures its' health.

Bladder Stones: Yes, rabbits do get bladder stones, and bladder 'sludge'. This is due to too much calcium in the diet as rabbits only get rid of excess dietary calcium via their urine.

Obesity: Obesity is a big problem in rabbits, and is usually caused by too high a fat diet (as with us!). This is usually more of a problem with rabbits fed on mix type diets

For help and advice on the best diet to feed you rabbit, just call us

**Caring for your pet
throughout
Staffordshire**

Our website is currently being updated. Why not visit us soon at:

www.shiresvets.co.uk