Prevention of benzalkonium chloride exposure

- Store products securely out of sight and out of reach of pets and children.
- Always read and follow the manufacturer's instructions.
- If required, dilute the product as instructed.
- Do not allow your cat to walk over a recently treated surface.
- Prevent access until the product is dry.
- If used outside try and restrict access if a recently treated surface becomes wet after rain.
- Always clean up spills promptly.
- If your cat comes into contact with the disinfectant, for example after a spillage or accidentally being sprayed, wash off immediately and contact your Animal PoisonLine for advice.

ALTERNATIVES METHODS OF CLEANING

- If your cat regularly walks on kitchen surfaces it may be safer to use other methods of cleaning.
- Steam cleaning is a chemical-free alternative (depending on the surface to be cleaned).
- Alternatively, non-ionic or anionic detergents (such as diluted washing up liquid) can be used. These detergents are less irritant than cationic detergents.
- If disinfection is necessary, and steam cleaning not possible, then properly diluted bleach is an effective antibacterial agent.

What to do if you think your pet has been poisoned

EMERGENCY ADVICE

- **Call Animal PoisonLine on 01202 509000 even if your pet is showing no signs to find out whether a trip to the vet is required.**
- **Remove your pet from the source of poison.**
- **Do not try to make your pet vomit – NEVER give salt water.**
- **Collect the poison and take a sample/ container with you if you are advised to take your pet to the vet practice.**

Animal POISONLine 24hr advice for owners

01202 509000

www.animalpoisonline.co.uk
24 hours a day (charges apply)

COVER PHOTO BY HEATHER - FLICKR

VETERINARY POISONS INFORMATION SERVICE

Animal PoisonLine is run by the VPIS, the UK's only animal poison centre, which has provided advice to vets on the management of poisoning in animals for over 25 years.

Animal POISONLine 24hr advice for owners

01202 509000

BENZALKONIUM CHLORIDE (DISINFECTANT) POISONING IN CATS

What is benzalkonium chloride?

Many household disinfectants, such as antibacterial sprays and some patio cleaners, contain a compound called benzalkonium chloride which is a cationic detergent.

Cationic detergents are irritant and can cause adverse effects in cats that have licked or walked over treated surfaces.

Disinfectants can be harmful to cats and so should be used sensibly and only when necessary.

What are the signs of benzalkonium chloride poisoning?

Signs of benzalkonium chloride exposure often do not occur immediately and can be delayed by several hours.

Signs of benzalkonium chloride exposure include:

- Drooling
- A red and inflamed tongue with a painful mouth
- High body temperature
- Reduced appetite and/or drinking
- Redness and irritation of the skin
- Coughing and breathing difficulties

What to do if your cat has been in contact with benzalkonium chloride

- If your cat has been exposed to a product containing benzalkonium chloride – contact Animal PoisonLine immediately who will advise you if you need to visit the vet.
- If exposure was recent, wash the product off the skin and fur to prevent further ingestion.
- If you do need to take your cat to the vet treatment may include one or more of the following:
  - Pain relief
  - Drugs to control drooling
  - Intravenous fluids
  - Syringe feeding

Outcome of benzalkonium chloride poisoning

Most cats recover fully from benzalkonium chloride exposure but it can take several days for the ulcers and inflammation in the mouth to heal fully.