Prevention of ethylene glycol poisoning

- Dispose of the fluid drained from a car radiator promptly (flush down the drain).
- Clean up all spills of antifreeze, even diluted antifreeze from the car radiator.
- Do not allow your cat to drink, or to walk through, fluid that has been drained from a vehicle radiator.
- Store antifreeze products securely and safely.
- Replace the cap on the antifreeze container securely after use.

PHOTO BY PAUL JOSEPH - FLICKR

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.**
- **If it seems likely that there is material on your cat's fur, this should be washed off and the cat prevented from grooming.**
- **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 ROBERT COUSE-BAKER - 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

ETHYLENE GLYCOL (ANTIFREEZE) POISONING IN CATS

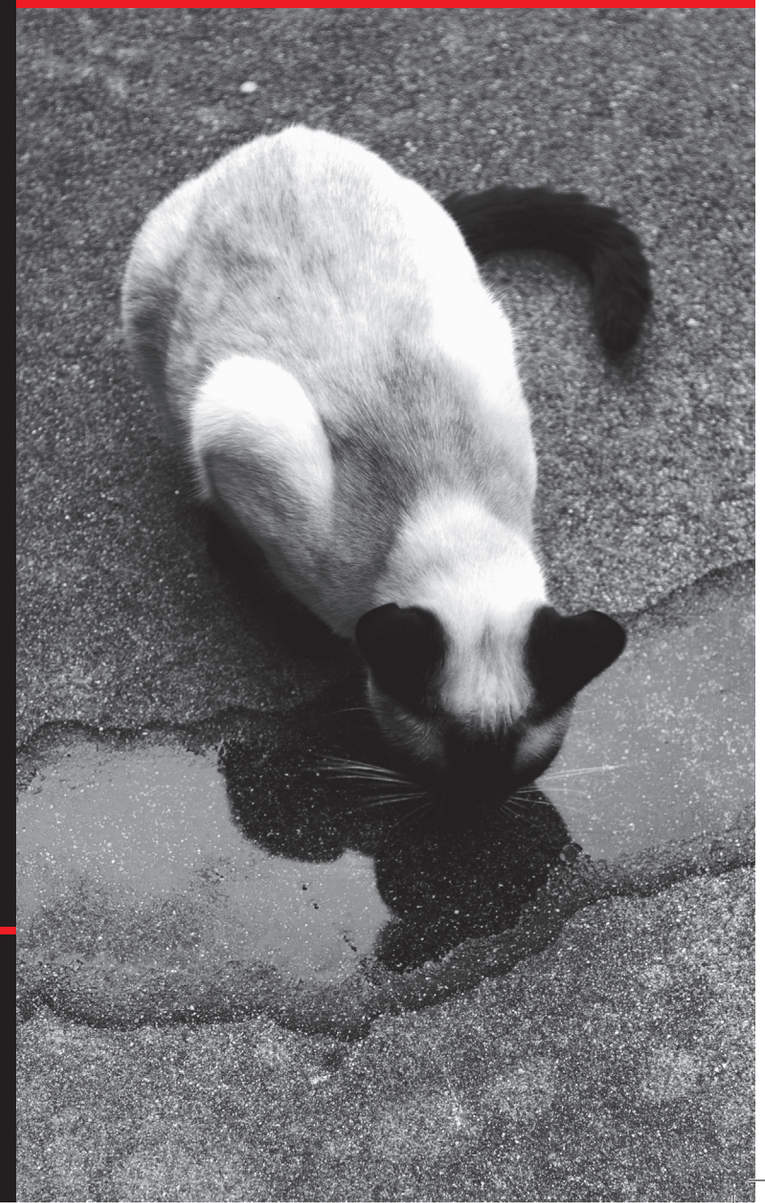

PHOTO BY NICK HARRIS - FLICKR

What is ethylene glycol?

Ethylene glycol is a common ingredient in antifreezes for car and other vehicle cooling systems. It is used to prevent radiators from freezing and bursting in cold weather, but is present all year round as it also protects the engine from corrosion.

Cats are very susceptible to ethylene glycol and even a very small amount (around a teaspoon of concentrated antifreeze) can cause kidney failure and death.

Sources of ethylene glycol

Ethylene glycol is a common ingredient in antifreeze but is also found in de-icing products for windscreens (rarely), some brake fluids, paints and, in small quantities, computer ink cartridges. Cats are most commonly exposed to ethylene glycol from ingestion of antifreeze.

It is commonly stated that ethylene glycol is sweet to taste; however cats are unable to taste sweet things and this is not the reason cats drink ethylene glycol.

What are the signs of ethylene glycol poisoning?

Ethylene glycol causes kidney failure in cats but the initial signs of toxicity can be subtle and easily missed and may not be apparent until hours after ingestion.

The clinical signs of ethylene glycol poisoning can include:

- Incoordination
- Thirst
- Urination
- Panting
- Drowsiness
- Lethargy
- Coma
- Death

What to do if your cat has ingested ethylene glycol

- If your cat has been exposed to ethylene glycol **– IMMEDIATELY** contact your vet.
- Your cat **MUST** go to the vet even if it is showing no signs of illness.
- Your vet may need to call the Veterinary Poisons Information Service for appropriate treatment advice.
- Treatment may include intravenous fluids, pain relief and blood and urine tests to monitor your cat's kidney function.
- If ingestion was recent your vet will administer antidotal therapy. This may be given by mouth or intravenously over a period of several days. This prevents the breakdown of ethylene glycol into toxic compounds in the body.

Outcome of ethylene glycol poisoning

Ethylene glycol poisoning is very serious in cats and unless treatment is started within a few hours the prognosis is very grave. Many cats present too late for effective treatment of ethylene glycol poisoning and either die or are put to sleep.