General advice

- Store medicines and products in their original containers, **out of sight and out of reach** of pets.
- Ensure cupboard doors are closed securely where products are stored.
- Replace the tops of containers securely after use.
- Keep the dustbin lids firmly closed to prevent access.
- Dispose of unwanted medicines safety (ideally return them to your pharmacy).
- Never give your pet a human medicine unless directed to do so by your vet.
- Always read the directions of household and garden products before use and use as directed.
- Always read the label of flea treatments. Only use products that are intended for use in cats.
- Clean up spills promptly.

PHOTO BY ROBERT COUSE-BAKER - 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.**
- **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)

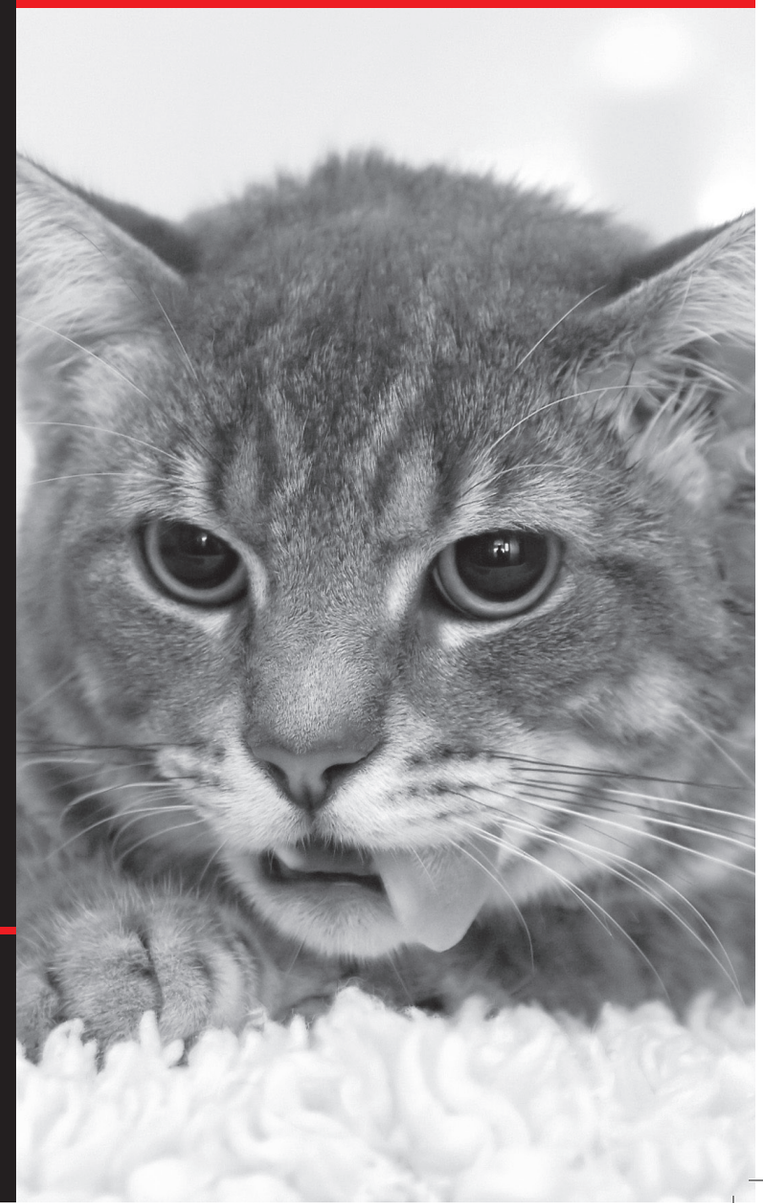
VETERINARY POISONS INFORMATION SERVICE

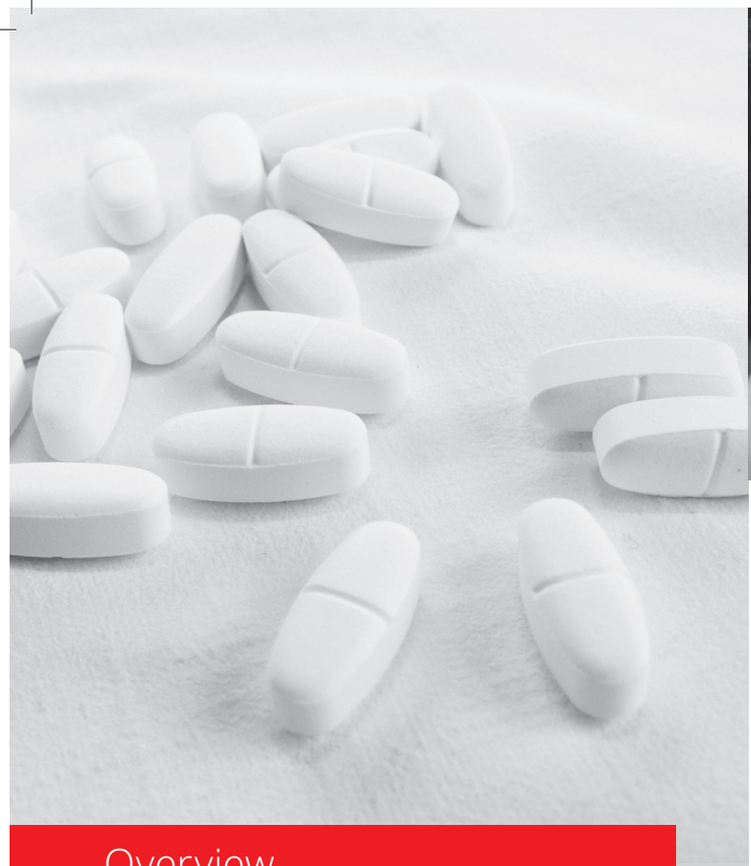
Animal PoisonLine is run by the VPIS, the UK's only animal poison centre, which has provided advice to vets on the management of poisoning in animals for over 25 years.

Animal POISONLine 24hr advice for owners

01202 509000

POISONING IN CATS



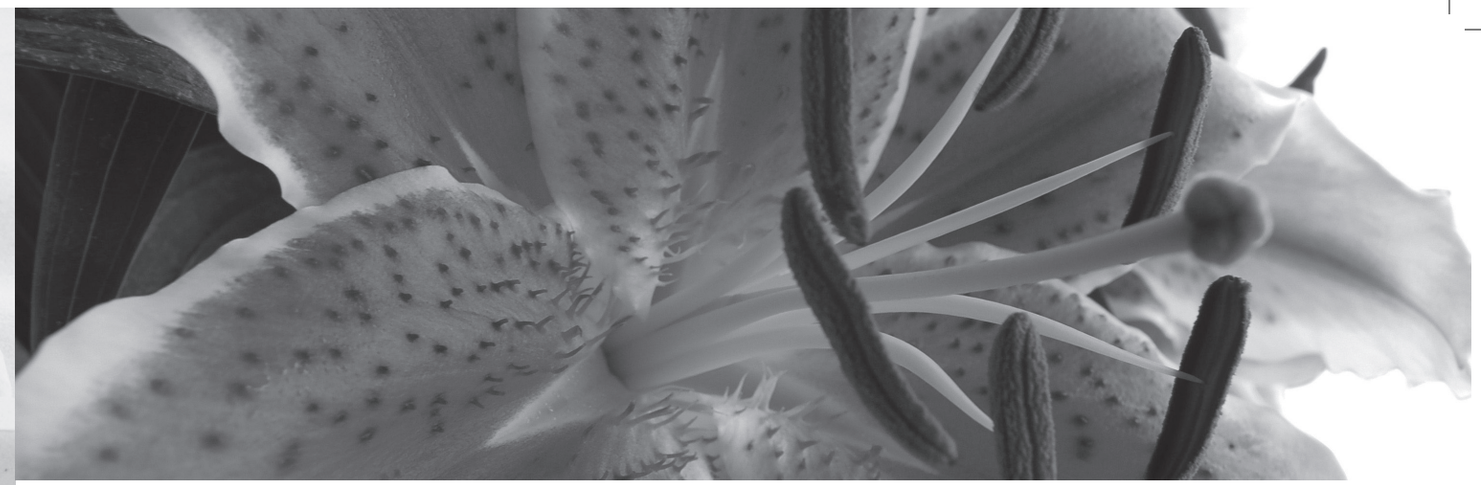


Overview

Cats are at particular risk from some medicines and household products. This is due to several factors:

- they lack certain enzymes which means they cannot eliminate some substances safely from the body;
- they groom thoroughly so may be exposed to substances on the skin and feet;
- their small size means that even a small dose of a substance may be hazardous;
- they are often outdoors and free roaming so you may not know what they have been exposed to.

This leaflet describes some of the common substances that are involved in poisoning in cats.



BENZALKONIUM CHLORIDE

Benzalkonium chloride is a common ingredient in household disinfectants and some patio cleaners. Benzalkonium chloride exposure can cause oral inflammation and ulceration, drooling and high body temperature. Effects can be delayed by several hours.

DETERGENT CAPSULES FOR WASHING CLOTHES

These contain concentrated detergents and can burst when wet or bitten. This can result in vomiting, breathing problems, skin and eye irritation and high body temperature.

ETHYLENE GLYCOL ANTIFREEZE

Ethylene glycol causes kidney failure in cats but the initial signs of toxicity can be subtle and easily missed in cats and may not be apparent until hours after ingestion. There is an antidote for ethylene glycol poisoning but to be effective it must be started as soon as possible.

LILIES

Lilies, i.e. the *Lilium* (true lily) and *Hemerocallis* (day lily) species, are poisonous to cats and cause kidney failure.

PARACETAMOL

Cats are very sensitive to paracetamol. It affects the red blood cells and causes liver injury. There is usually severe breathing difficulties and distress and there can be facial swelling. Signs of liver damage occur several days after ingestion.

PERMETHRIN

Permethrin is an insecticide and ingredient in some dog spot-on products for the control of fleas. Cats can be poisoned through contact with a treated dog or more commonly after accidental use of a dog product for the treatment of fleas. Signs, which can last several days, include twitching, tremor and convulsions.

WHITE SPIRIT

White spirit is often available when painting and decorating. It is irritant to the skin, eyes and the gut and can cause oral ulceration, skin inflammation and burns, vomiting and breathing difficulties in cats.