

ANTIFREEZE POISONING

This is the time of year that I like to remind pet owners and the public in general, of the hazards of antifreeze. The toxic ingredient and major component of it, is ethylene glycol, which can also be found in brake fluid, liquid rust inhibitors and hydraulic fluid. My message, short and to the point, is that” **antifreeze has a pleasant taste, and it is very appealing to cats and dogs, and just a lick can be fatal”.**

Most cases of antifreeze poisoning occur around the pet’s own home, or a neighbor’s home, and very sadly for the owner of the pet, the cause is normally due to improper storage or disposal. Clinical signs of ethylene glycol poisoning depend on how long it has been since the pet drank the poison. They can appear “drunk”. They may vomit, drink and urinate excessively, and they can become depressed, weak and dehydrated. They may develop diarrhea, mouth ulcers, rapid breathing and seizures. The pet can lapse into a coma, and then die. By the time the ethylene glycol metabolites have attacked the kidneys, the prognosis is generally not good.

To avoid accidental ingestion, my advice would be:

- > Check your vehicle regularly for leaks.
- > Check out the garage floor and driveway for evidence of leaks.
- > This would include checking after visiting friends and family vehicles.
- > If you find a spill, thoroughly and immediately clean affected area.
- > Remember to dispose of the spillage very carefully and securely.
- > Always store antifreeze in tightly closed **and labeled** containers.
- > Store container in a secured cabinet or cupboard.

In any case, never store any form of gasoline, oil or antifreeze in an area accessible by any household pet or child!

If you suspect that your pet has ingested antifreeze, please contact your veterinarian immediately. **The quicker treatment starts after ingestion, the better the chances are of your pet surviving the poisoning.** Always make sure that you are aware of the telephone number and location of your emergency veterinary service.