

ACCES for Pet Health

<http://blog.seattlepi.nwsourc.com/accesforpethealth/archives/186162.asp>

Protect your pet from Antifreeze Poisoning

By Beth Davidow, DVM DACVECC and Christina Ryan

As the weather gets colder one common pet danger to watch out for is antifreeze poisoning. Antifreeze is a necessity for our vehicles to operate properly in the cold weather, but unfortunately is very deadly to cats and dogs. Often antifreeze is spilled on the ground or leaks from vehicles. Although it is usually neon green and looks like it would be unappealing to anyone, it actually has a very sweet flavor that attracts animals.

Even the smallest amount of antifreeze can be fatal. Often cats will walk through a puddle of it and then lick it off their paws, ingesting enough to cause death. A few tablespoons are enough to kill a medium-sized dog.

Symptoms Symptoms generally occur very rapidly. The sooner the pet is treated, the better the prognosis. Kidney failure from the substance in antifreeze called *ethylene glycol* is the greatest concern with antifreeze poisoning. Once the poison is ingested, kidney failure can occur within a couple of days. By the time condition has developed most animals will die, so it is important to have your pet tested if you have any suspicion your pet may have ingested antifreeze. If you notice any of the following behaviors, you should contact your veterinarian IMMEDIATELY:

- Depression, staggering ("walking drunk") and/or seizures (will occur within 2-3 hours of ingestion)
- Excessive drinking & urination with vomiting (will occur in the 1-3 days post-ingestion)
- At onset of kidney failure (will occur 2-3 days post-ingestion), the pet will become depressed, vomit, and urinate increasingly less. Your pet may appear to have gotten better in the previous two days before these symptoms begin.



Watch closely for antifreeze poisoning-the sooner you catch it, the better chances of recovery for your pet.

Treatment The blood and urine tests done for antifreeze ingestion are designed to detect the presence of Ethylene Glycol in the pet's system. Many emergency veterinary facilities have a simple test kit that will deliver results quickly and can detect the substance in blood within one hour of ingestion. More extensive blood and urine testing may also occur.

Depending on the time since ingestion and the signs your pet is showing, your veterinarian may choose to induce vomiting to remove any antifreeze in the stomach, and then feed your pet activated charcoal to absorb any remaining chemical. Antizol-vet™ (4-MP) is a drug that prevents the liver from breaking down the components of antifreeze and protects the kidneys from damage. If given within 8 hours of ingestion, most animals have an excellent prognosis for complete recovery. If it has been over 8 hours, this drug is not as effective. Once kidney failure occurs, treatment must be aggressive and could include dialysis with a specialist, but survival rates are low.

Prevention Clearly animals in the highest risk group are those that go outside and are allowed to roam unattended. The best prevention is avoidance. Keep your pets indoors, only letting them out on a leash or under strict supervision. Although the risk of antifreeze poisoning increases in winter, your pet cat still be exposed to it year-round.

Other prevention tips:

- Keep all antifreeze containers closed tightly and inaccessible to pets
- Never pour used antifreeze on the ground or in a drain. Take it to a [designated dump facility](#)
- Check your driveway for puddles that may have leaked from your car. Clean spills with towels and throw them away. Do not rinse spills down the storm drain.
- Use [alternative antifreeze products](#) that contain fewer chemicals toxic to pets, people and the environment (look for products containing propylene glycol).

Source: <http://www.vetmed.wsu.edu/ClientED/antifreeze.aspx>

Posted by **Christina Ryan** at November 24, 2009 10:28 a.m.

· [Return to Protect your pet from Antifreeze Poisoning](#)



Take care when using and disposing of antifreeze to protect your pets.