

Antifreeze Poisoning in Pets

Most commercial antifreeze products contain ethylene glycol, and this is the most dangerous form of antifreeze to our pets. Unfortunately, antifreeze can have a sweet smell that attracts our pets to consume it. Ethylene glycol causes quick and severe kidney damage when ingested. In most cases, vomiting can be seen within the first few hours and within 1-6 hours, signs of depression, drunken walk, weakness, and increased thirst and urination occur. By 18-36 hours post ingestion, irreversible kidney failure leading to death occurs.

Inducing vomiting is only helpful after recent ingestion of less than one hour. Otherwise, the goal of further treatment is to slow down the metabolism of the toxin soon enough to reduce the chance of kidney failure. This can only be done through a veterinary hospital that has the necessary medications, and fluid diuresis is also an essential component to treatment. If treatment can be instituted within 8 hours or less of ingestion, the prognosis can be good for return to health. If longer, the outcome is grave for reversing the damage that has already been done.

The most important thing we can do to prevent our pets from consuming this fatal toxin is to limit exposure to our pets, dog and cat alike. If you have any concern about whether or not your pet may have consumed antifreeze, it is always best to have them seen by their local veterinarian as soon as possible- it could save their life!