Aspirin Toxicity in Dogs and Cats  
*Drs. Foster & Smith Educational Staff*

**Toxin**  
Aspirin, acetylsalicylic acid, and salicylate.

**Source**  
Aspirin, Pepto-Bismol, and many other pain and fever medications.

**General Information**  
Aspirin toxicity is much more severe in cats than in dogs. Cats are unable to rapidly metabolize and excrete aspirin. The toxic effects include bone marrow suppression, bleeding, inflammation of the liver, kidney disease, and stomach ulceration.

Children's aspirin contains 81 mg, regular aspirin contains 325 mg, and extra-strength aspirin contains 500 mg. Pepto-Bismol contains 300 mg of salicylate per tablet and 262 mg per 15 ml (1 tbsp.) of liquid. Numerous other products contain aspirin. Be sure to check the label and with your veterinarian before using any human medication on your pet.

**Toxic Dose**  
**Dogs:** 22 mg per pound per day.  
**Cats:** 11 mg per pound per day, may see symptoms after one dose.

**Signs**  
Signs usually develop within 4-6 hours with an acute overdose. They include depression, lack of appetite, vomiting which may contain blood, abdominal pain, increased respiratory rate, acute kidney failure, weakness, coma, and death.

Chronic lower doses in dogs may lead to stomach ulcers and perforation, toxic liver inflammation, and bone marrow suppression resulting in anemia.

**Immediate Action**  
Induce vomiting and seek veterinary attention.

**Veterinary Care**  
**General treatment:** The induction of vomiting may be continued, gastric lavage is performed, and activated charcoal is administered.

**Supportive treatment:** IV fluids are administered to maintain hydration. Acid-base balance and blood glucose levels are monitored and treated to maintain them within normal ranges. The lungs and brain are monitored for the development of edema, and appropriate medications are given if necessary. Medication is given to protect against and treat GI ulcers.

**Specific treatment:** Unavailable.

**Prognosis**  
Favorable, if treatment is started early. Poor, if symptoms are present when treatment begins.

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Keep this and all other medications out of the reach of children and pets.

If you think your pet has been poisoned...  
Contact your veterinarian or one of the Animal Poison Control Centers listed below if you think your pet may have accidentally received or been given an overdose of the medication.

**ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center - 24-hour service available throughout North America.**  
1-888-4ANI-HELP (1-888-426-4435), $65.00 per case, billed to caller's credit card.  
Follow-up calls can be made for no additional charge by dialing 888-299-2473.

There is no charge to the call and involves a situation covered by the Animal Product Safety Service.  
**Pet Poison Helpline - 24-hour service available throughout North America for pet owners and veterinary professionals who require assistance with treating a potentially poisoned pet.**  
1-800-213-6680 ($59.00 per incident). Staffed 24 hours a day.