Aspirin Toxicity in Dogs and Cats
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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.