

Marijuana Toxicity in Dogs and Cats

Drs. Foster & Smith Educational Staff

Toxin

Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC)

Source

Hashish, marijuana, and hemp, *Cannabis*.

General Information

Pets are more commonly poisoned from marijuana through ingestion other than inhalation. THC is the toxin that causes the symptoms and is absorbed quickly after ingestion. THC has strong antiemetic effects which make it difficult to successfully induce vomiting to remove the toxin from the pet. Most animals will recover, but it may take 1-3 days.

Toxic Dose

Depends on the concentration of THC and the form of marijuana ingested.

Signs

Ataxia, dilated pupils, 'glazed' eyes, drop in body temperature, increase or decrease in heart rate, bizarre behavior, hyperesthesia, disorientation, somnolence, depression (may last 18-36 hours), coma, excitation is seen occasionally, drooling, tremors, respiratory depression, or death.

Immediate Action

Induce vomiting. 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: The temperature, pulse, and respiration are monitored and different medications are given depending upon the signs present. A safe environment should be provided where the pet cannot hurt itself or others while disorientated.

Specific treatment: Unavailable. To confirm the diagnosis, urine levels of THC can be determined in the laboratory.

Prognosis

Fair