

# Moth Ball Poisoning in Dogs and Cats

*Drs. Foster & Smith Educational Staff*

## Toxin

Naphthalene and Paradichlorobenzene

## Source

Naphthalene is found in toilet bowl deodorizers, moth balls, moth crystals, and moth cakes. Paradichlorobenzene is found in diaper pail, toilet bowl, and restroom deodorizers and in moth balls, moth crystals, and moth cakes.

## General Information

The use of naphthalene is being replaced by paradichlorobenzene because naphthalene is about twice as toxic.

Paradichlorobenzene is an organochlorine insecticide. Ingestion of it causes CNS excitement and seizures. It is metabolized to a compound that causes liver damage.

## Toxic Dose

Unknown

## Signs

Symptoms include vomiting, seizures, and an odor of mothballs from the animal's breath, mouth, and vomitus. Heinz body anemia causes pallor and increased heart rate. Methemoglobinemia causes the gums to become a brown or blue color. Liver inflammation may occur several days after exposure resulting in loss of appetite, vomiting, diarrhea, lethargy, and icterus.

## Immediate Action

Do NOT induce vomiting. Seek veterinary attention.

## Veterinary Care

General treatment: Gastric lavage will be performed only if the patient is presented within 30-60 minutes of ingestion.

[Activated charcoal](#) will be administered.

Supportive treatment: The animal will be monitored and treated for seizures, methemoglobinemia, anemia, and liver disease.

Specific treatment: Unavailable.

## Prognosis

Variable.