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## Marijuana Toxicity in Pets

Marijuana toxicity is becoming more prevalent in recent years, with over 350 known reported cases in 2011 alone. Toxicity can occur when a pet has access to and eats marijuana plants, dried portions of the plant, marijuana cigarette remains, or food containing marijuana. Keeping marijuana in a high, "pet-proof" cupboard will prevent accidental ingestion of marijuana.

### Clinical Signs:

The majority of cases are dogs (95%). Symptoms usually begin 30-90 minutes after the marijuana has been eaten. Because marijuana is stored in the body's fat, the effects can last for 3-4 days. Symptoms include:

- Anxiety- panting, whining, pacing, and agitation.
- Extreme lethargy (listlessness) that can border on unconsciousness in extreme cases.
- Impaired balance, stumbling, staggering and falling when trying to walk.
- Drooling, vomiting and diarrhea.
- Loss of bladder and bowel control.
- Dilated pupils.
- Slow or increased heart rate.
- Extreme excitement or excessive vocalization.
- Trembling, twitching and seizures.
- Low temperature.

### Diagnosis:

Test kits designed to detect marijuana in the urine of animals is used to diagnose marijuana intoxication. Additional blood work may be needed to determine if there are any secondary complications due to the marijuana toxicity.

### Treatment:

If it has been within 30 minutes of the pet ingesting the marijuana, it may be possible to induce vomiting, but after symptoms have started, the properties of marijuana that help control nausea will make it difficult to induce vomiting.

Activated charcoal is a liquid used to treat poisoning. It is given orally and passes from one end of the pet to the other, trapping and absorbing toxins. When the charcoal is passed from the pet, the toxins pass as well. Activated charcoal should be administered every eight hours for the first 24 hours if the pet is alert enough to swallow.

Hospitalization for intravenous fluids, keeping the pet warm and calm are also essential to quick recovery.

With supportive care from your Veterinarian, mild cases can resolve in 3-12 hours, while more extreme cases can take 3-4 days for full recovery. In rare cases marijuana toxicity has been fatal.

**\* If you know or suspect your pet has ingested marijuana, let your Veterinarian know right away so that supportive care can be started immediately.\***