



Interesting Case from our web site www.fairfield-vets.co.uk



"Henry and Oliver" - Cats - Poisoned by OTC Flea Treatment



Henry



Oliver

"A cat is NOT a small dog" is a phrase that our pharmacologist at University regularly tried to drum into our absorptive brains. Obvious you might think, but until more recent veterinary and medical research has been able to highlight the more subtle physiological differences between mammals it has been very easy to assume that we will all react very similarly.

The fact is that cats like Henry and Oliver have low concentrations of the enzyme glucoronyl transferase. This enzyme is particularly important in the breakdown of many commonly used and easily available "household" drugs such as paracetamol. Additionally, this lack of enzyme is also thought to be why cats appear to be so susceptible to "over the counter" flea treatments such as Bob Martins, containing pyrethrins made from Chrysanthemum flowers.

This is especially so when owners opt to use the dog dose on their cats!! This combined with cats' natural grooming behaviour means that toxic levels can be reached quite easily. The adverse effects cause twitching, excessive salivation, convulsions and even death.

Fortunately, for Oliver and Henry prompt treatment by my colleagues Geraldine and Erain have restored them back to excellent health!

The fact is that "over the counter" remedies when used inappropriately account for a large number of poisoning enquiries every year. Nearly 70% of reported cases of "shop available" flea treatment poisoning occurs in cats.

Paracetamol, another "household" drug is the most common cause of fatal poisoning in the cat.

Interestingly, what few people may realise is that paracetamol overdosage in humans causing liver failure and death was of such concern in the UK that legislation in 1998 restricted the amount of tablets that anyone could buy at any one time.

A matter of law that I witnessed being enforced only the other day at Morrisons where a cashier explained in a very polite manner to a customer who was none too impressed.....who knows she may just have saved his life!

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This article is available on the Fairfield Veterinary Centre web site at www.fairfield-vets.co.uk

You won't care how much we know - until you know how much we care