



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



"Tilly" - A Rat Poison Snack!



Since the launch of the Veterinary Poisons Information Service in 1992 the London centre has received more enquiries about rat poisons that cause bleeding (anticoagulants) than any other type of product; 268 calls in 1997 alone.

Over 85% of all those enquiries involved dogs. Given the feeding habits of most dogs which is to gorge on any tasty morsel that comes their way no matter how toxic it is not hard to understand why.

Once swallowed, anticoagulants are absorbed from the gut which then act by inhibiting the production of Vitamin K which in turn reduces the blood's ability to clot.

Clinical effects therefore include bleeding from the nose, gums and bowel. Bruises can be apparent on the skin. Anaemia, lethargy and inappetance are all common symptoms. In the most severe cases this can lead to circulatory collapse and death. If treatment is to be successful it is important that it is started as soon as possible.

Fortunately for "Tilly", her owners were quickly aware of the consequences of her "tasty treat" and immediately rushed her to our surgery, having the good sense to bring the container so that the specific toxin could be identified. "Tilly" seemed quite bewildered by all the fuss over a simple snack!

Since our practice is registered with the Veterinary Poisons Unit invaluable information is made available over the phone regarding the best treatment to be instituted and the likely outcome.

"Tilly" was not showing any clinical signs on admission and Vitamin K was administered to maintain her blood's ability to clot. This easily administered antidote would then sustain her until the toxin had been successfully metabolised. Yet another successful outcome to add to the statistics!

By contrast, in humans paracetamol continues to generate the greatest number of emergency inquiries of any single agent, and it constitutes 48% of hospital admissions for poisoning in the United Kingdom. And the most common cause of death by poisoning in humans is carbon monoxide.....bear that in mind when you switch your gas boiler on this winter!!

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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