

## Prevention of ethylene glycol poisoning

- Dispose of the fluid drained from a car radiator promptly (flush down the drain).
- Clean up all spills of antifreeze, even diluted antifreeze from the car radiator.
- Do not allow your cat to drink, or to walk through, fluid that has been drained from a vehicle radiator.
- Store antifreeze products securely and safely.
- Replace the cap on the antifreeze container securely after use.



PHOTO BY PAUL JOSEPH - FLICKR

## What to do if you think your pet has been poisoned

### EMERGENCY ADVICE

- Remove your pet from the source of poison.
- Do not try to make your pet vomit – NEVER give salt water.
- If it seems likely that there is material on your cat's fur, this should be washed off and the cat prevented from grooming.
- Contact your veterinary surgeon for advice - do not delay seeking advice even if your pet is well. Your vet will ask for details of what has happened.
- Collect the poison and take a sample with you if you are advised to take your pet to the practice.
- Remember to protect yourself and others.

Contact details for your vet:

**Rowan Veterinary Centre Ltd**

Hillock Lane, Warton, Preston, PR4 1TP

Tel: 01772 639800

The Old Bank, 369 Whitegate Drive,

Blackpool, FY3 9PH

Tel: 01253 766352

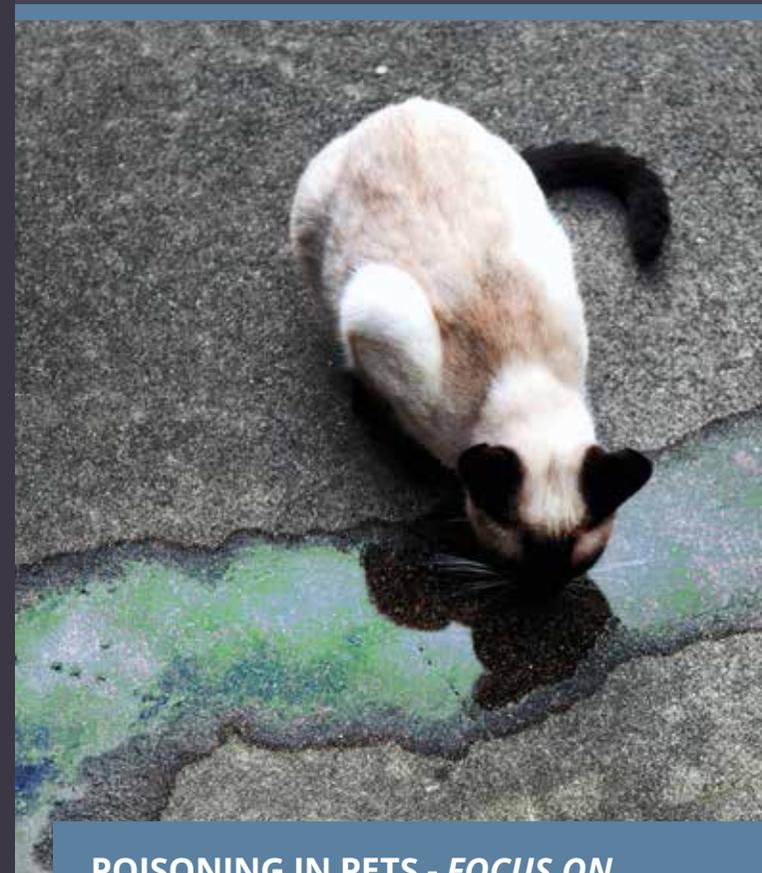
[www.rowanvets.co.uk](http://www.rowanvets.co.uk)



The Veterinary Poisons Information Service (VPIS) is a 24-hour telephone emergency service for veterinary professionals providing information on the management of actual and suspected poisoning in animals.



**VETERINARY POISONS  
INFORMATION SERVICE**



**POISONING IN PETS - FOCUS ON...**

## Ethylene glycol poisoning in cats





## What is ethylene glycol?

Ethylene glycol is a common ingredient in antifreezes for car and other vehicle cooling systems. It is used to prevent radiators from freezing and bursting in cold weather, but is present all year round as it also protects the engine from corrosion.

Cats are very susceptible to ethylene glycol and even a very small amount (around a teaspoon of concentrated antifreeze) can cause kidney failure and death.

## Sources of ethylene glycol

Ethylene glycol is a common ingredient in antifreeze but is also found in de-icing products for windscreens (rarely), some brake fluids, paints and, in small quantities, computer ink cartridges. Cats are most commonly exposed to ethylene glycol from ingestion of antifreeze.

It is commonly stated that ethylene glycol is sweet to taste; however cats are unable to taste sweet things and this is not the reason cats drink ethylene glycol.

## What are the signs of ethylene glycol poisoning?

Ethylene glycol causes kidney failure in cats but the initial signs of toxicity can be subtle and easily missed and may not be apparent until hours after ingestion.

The clinical signs of ethylene glycol poisoning can include:

- Incoordination
- Thirst
- Urination
- Panting
- Drowsiness
- Lethargy
- Coma
- Death



## How is ethylene glycol poisoning treated?

- If your cat has been exposed to ethylene glycol – **IMMEDIATELY** contact your vet.
- If exposure was very recent your vet may induce vomiting to remove some of the ethylene glycol from the stomach before it is absorbed.
- Treatments will include intravenous fluids, pain relief and blood and urine tests to monitor your cat's kidney function.
- If ingestion was recent your vet will administer antidotal therapy which in this case is alcohol (ethanol). This may be given by mouth or intravenously over a period of several days. This prevents the breakdown of ethylene glycol into toxic compounds in the body.
- Haemodialysis is another possible treatment but this is expensive and very rarely available.

## Outcome of ethylene glycol poisoning

Ethylene glycol poisoning is very serious in cats and unless treatment is started within a few hours the prognosis is very grave. Many cats present too late for effective treatment of ethylene glycol poisoning and either die or are put to sleep.