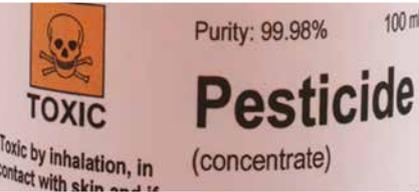


Toxic Times

SUMMER 2017 ISSUE



Welcome

Welcome again to Toxic Times, the Summer edition!

Hopefully we can look forward to some warm, balmy days although this may be another of those examples of hope triumphing over experience!

Although very little in this world can be definitively classed as non-toxic, there are a number of things to which animals can be exposed which we would regard as agents of low toxicity, and we'll discuss a number of them in this issue.

We'll also consider things for owners to pay special attention to when travelling on UK-based holidays with pets.

Our Meet the Team section features Tiffany Blackett, a vet with a wealth of experience and who works tirelessly in native wildlife treatment and rehabilitation, as well as for us here at the VPIS - and we discover the food she can't resist.

It's always important to know where to obtain treatments and antidotes, and, as VPIS Information Scientist Mark Van-de-Velde notes, at this time of year adder antivenom may be especially relevant - the VPIS can assist with locating supplies in an emergency.

A brief refresher of the remaining CPD dates, along with a Case Corner, which highlights another success with lipid infusion, rounds off the issue.

Enjoy the Summer, whatever the weather!

2017 CPD COURSES

Key Areas Covered (six hours of CPD)

- Case histories for potential poisons cases
- Decontamination for poisons cases
- Toxicology information resources

Cost and Bookings

Standard fee: £295 + VAT
Early bird fee: £250 + VAT*

Each delegate will receive course notes and a CPD certificate (equates to 6 hours CPD training). Lunch and refreshments are provided.

Bookings: To reserve a place, please visit the link below and download the booking form.

<https://vpisglobal.com/class-based-courses-2017/>

Date	Location
June 21st	Bristol
July 19th	Newcastle
September 13th	London
October 4th	Manchester
November 8th	Cambridge

* Early bird discount applies to bookings made up to 8 weeks prior to the course date





CASE CORNER

Percy, a 7.2kg pug, ingested an unknown but suspected 24 x 200mg ibuprofen, giving him a possible dose of 666mg/kg.

He was found within 1-2 hours of ingestion, and had already vomited a number of times at home. On presentation to the veterinary surgery, he was depressed, ataxic, bradycardic and hypothermic. Casts were seen in his urine and there was a suggestion of twitching, although this may have been shivering due to the hypothermia, which was proving unresponsive to warming measures.

Percy had already been treated with maropitant, omeprazole, iv fluids at an initial rate of 10 x maintenance, dropping to 5 x subsequently.

VPIS recommended the addition of an H2 receptor antagonist, misoprostol, monitoring potassium levels, renal function and, in view of the potentially large ingestion, monitoring hepatic function, with the administration of acetylcysteine and/or s-adenosyl methionine as liver protectants.

It was also recommended that intravenous lipid infusion was used, as this has been shown to be beneficial in treating cases where high doses (>400mg/kg) of ibuprofen are involved.

90 minutes after the lipid infusion, the treating vet gave the following comment:

"I thought I'd let you know that Percy's demeanour and mentation improved dramatically after the intralipid. Also his heart rate and body temperature are coming up and he is very perky!"

5 days after the exposure, Percy had experienced some mild GI signs that were now resolving, his BUN and CREA remained normal and he had only a mild increase in ALP.

Although the exact dose of ibuprofen was not confirmed, lipid infusion may have played a part in Percy's recovery, and is worth considering where a large ingestion (>400mg/kg) is suspected.

Your pet on a UK-based holiday

One of the many joys of holidaying in the UK is that you can choose to take your pet with you, although do remember that there are still things which can cause problems, even when away from home.

Medications

Regular or prescription medications may not be kept as safely whilst on holiday- always ensure your pet cannot access them by keeping them out of reach and securely stored.

The Beach

Jelly fish: even when dead, can sting, causing pain and swelling. Rinse the area with seawater and contact a vet, as treatment is likely to be required.

Seawater: ingestion of any large quantity should be regarded as serious and veterinary advice should be immediately sought. Although seaweed is not toxic, it can represent a significant seawater ingestion.

Sun creams, lotions, sprays and after sun preparations: low toxicity so no treatment required for ingestion.

The Picnic

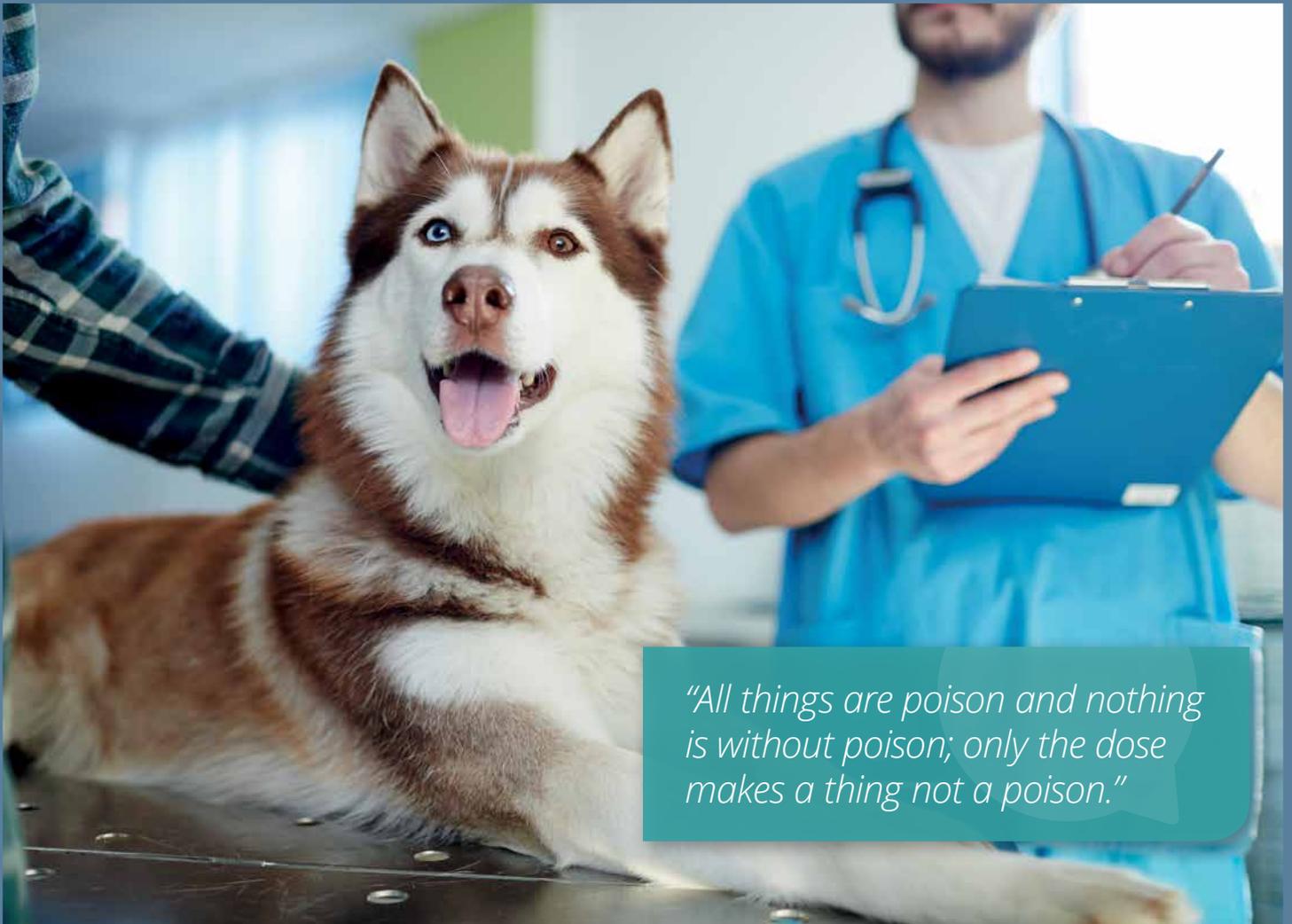
Charcoal, firelighters, briquettes: represent varying hazards depending on their composition. Contact your vet especially if your pet is retching, coughing or vomiting

Dropped food: onions, garlic, grapes, raisins, chocolate and left-over alcohol all pose a risk to animals. Prevention is key, but let a vet know if these are ingested by (usually!) your dog.

Cool packs: generally of low toxicity, although a call to the local vet with the trade name if possible will clarify the situation.

Wasps and bees stings: like us, some animals will be particularly sensitive and develop severe reactions; in all cases, pain and swelling will occur, causing distress, so consult a vet as soon as possible.





"All things are poison and nothing is without poison; only the dose makes a thing not a poison."

Don't you know it's **NOT** Toxic?

Considered as the founder of toxicology, Paracelsus was a 15th Century philosopher, physician and general all round man of science. His view that,

"All things are poison and nothing is without poison; only the dose makes a thing not a poison."

is the basis of toxicology, and it follows that nothing can really be described as non-toxic. However, there are a number of things that, in an acute, one off exposure, we can consider as having low toxicity. Whilst care should always be taken when an animal is exposed to anything that was not intended, the following are low risk, and would not be expected to cause anything more than mild, self-limiting gastrointestinal signs.

Silica gel: packets are often found in electrical appliances, and although definitely not intended for consumption, they are inert and are unlikely to cause harm.

Suncreams and aftersun lotions: an animal may develop some diarrhoea if extremely large quantities are ingested, but there is no real need for concern.

Cosmetics and general skin care products: in an acute situation, only mild gastrointestinal signs are likely to result and treatment of any sort is highly unlikely to be required.

Multivitamins: over the counter preparations in an acute ingestion are again unlikely to cause anything other than mild gastrointestinal signs. Prescription preparations of Vitamin D, either dermal or tablet form however must be regarded as highly toxic, and prompt treatment given.

Oral contraceptives: on first consideration, it might be expected that the ingestion of high dose steroid sex hormones may be problematic, causing bone marrow suppression, but this seems not to be the case in an acute ingestion, even if large amounts, such as the whole packet are eaten. Again mild gastric signs may be seen, and there is a notional risk that the oestrus cycle in adult females may be temporarily affected, and the owner may need to know of that risk.

Emulsion paints/Superglue/PVA glues: whilst presenting a challenge to remove from the skin, these products are not toxic via dermal absorption or ingestion. The application of a vegetable oil or butter to dry skin and fur may help emulsify the sticky substance and make it easier to subsequently remove with detergent and lukewarm water. Ingestion of large quantities of glue may lead to a risk of obstruction rather than toxicity.





MEET THE TEAM

Name: Tiffany Blackett
Job Title: Veterinary Information Scientist – part-time

How long have you worked for VPIS?
Since February 2015

What do you most like about your job?
There are so many aspects that I like about my job, but primarily offering support to clinicians and helping them to achieve successful outcomes following toxin exposures in animals. I also enjoy teaching on the VPIS one day CPD courses, as well as researching and producing up-to-date information on toxin case management which involves the review of published literature as well as case data in the extensive VPIS database.

What do you most dislike about the job?
Hearing about any fatal cases of poisoning.

Do you / did you have a pet / pets?
Pets of various species (e.g. cats, hamsters, rats, fish, etc.) have always played a large part in my life and I have had the pleasure of owning some wonderful dogs, all of which have been dogs re-homed from UK rescue centres. Currently I have two fabulous and very faithful rescue dogs, a Labrador cross and a Labrador-collie cross.

What are your hobbies / other interests?
My interests are in animal welfare, native wildlife treatment and rehabilitation, and wildlife conservation. I am particularly passionate about the plight of the native red squirrel (*Sciurus vulgaris*) and in a voluntary capacity I co-ordinate and run the on-going JSPCA Animals' Shelter Jersey Red Squirrel Disease Surveillance Scheme. The aims of this Channel Island squirrel surveillance scheme are broadly to: support Jersey red squirrel conservation (e.g. by informing the development of future strategic conservation

management practices and through community education); determine the incidence and prevalence of diseases and assess their impact on the local Jersey squirrel population; monitor for any new, emerging infectious diseases in the local squirrel population on Jersey; and to improve the clinical care and welfare of sick and injured red squirrels.

Worldwide travel is another one of my passions. I have been very fortunate in that I have been able to visit some incredible places in various countries across the globe and I have met some great people during my travels.

Favourite food?
If I had to choose just one, it would be either Emmental or Gouda cheese. Although I'm also quite partial to corn-on-the-cob, as well as caramel shortbread

Where is the most unusual place you have ever visited?
Madagascar is an amazing place with such incredible and unique biodiversity, and one of the insects endemic to Madagascar is certainly very unusual-looking, that is the giraffe-necked weevil.

Favourite quote:
"He who fears he will suffer, already suffers because he fears."

Michel de Montaigne. Do not be afraid of failure and do not give up.

ADDER BITES/ANTIVENOM

Adder bites are common during spring and early summer months and can cause significant harm to our furry friends. Snake bites are most common in dogs due to their innate curiosity and scavenger instincts. 37 confirmed cases in dogs have already been reported to the VPIS in 2017.

Once bitten by an adder, animals develop local effects which include localised painful swelling often occurring within minutes to a few hours. There may also be systemic effects, pain and sometimes bleeding. Other complications occur occasionally.

Treatment for adder bites is largely supportive. Adder antivenom if indicated, depending on the severity and location of the bite, is the most specific treatment and can significantly reduce not only the duration of swelling but also hospitalisation time.

Veterinary practices located in areas where adder populations are prevalent

are advised to keep a stock of antivenom at all times as treatment can be a difficult to source in an emergency, especially during out of hours.

If you have an animal bitten by an adder and urgently need adder antivenom, emergency supplies may be available through the ToxBox service. Please call the VPIS on **02073 055 055** to find out your nearest Toxbox provider, which may be able assist. Other emergency treatments are also available.



To ensure you have an adequate supply of antivenom all year round, please visit our website for more information on how veterinary practices can purchase antivenom from VMD approved wholesalers in the UK.