

FLEA & TICK PRODUCTS / PYRETHROID TOXICOSIS

Source

Pyrethrins are naturally occurring neurotoxins. Permethrins are a synthetic form of pyrethrins. These pyrethroids can be found in some shampoos, dips, foggers, sprays, and most recently "spot-on" products designed to eliminate fleas and/or ticks. Because cats are much more sensitive to pyrethroids than are dogs, using pyrethroid-containing dog flea and tick products on a cat can cause severe toxicity.

Symptoms (can occur quickly, but may be delayed for up to 24 hours after exposure)

- Hypersalivation
- Depression
- Vomiting
- Anorexia
- Tremors- facial, facial, and/or full body tremors
- Seizures
- Coma

Toxicity

Pyrethroids inhibit the normal function of nerves, causing them to repetitively fire. The severity of signs depends on the individual animal and the amount of exposure. Pyrethroids are absorbed through the skin and GI tract.

Cats that groom other cats and dogs treated with flea and tick products can become highly intoxicated due to oral ingestion of pyrethroids.

Diagnosis

Diagnosis is commonly based on clinical signs and a history of recent application of a pyrethroid-containing flea or tick product to the patient or house/playmate.

Treatment

Treatment is supportive and is aimed primarily at controlling any tremors or seizure activity with medications. There is a medication that works well at negating the toxic effects of . This antidote must be given at frequent intervals until the toxin has been metabolized and cleared from the body. If an animal has had a pyrethroid-containing product applied to its skin or fur, carefully bathing the animal with mild liquid dish washing detergent is necessary to remove any remaining toxin from the skin or fur.

Prognosis

Prognosis is good if treatment is early and aggressive. Supportive care is key.

