

LEAD TOXICITY

Source

Lead can be found in the environment in a variety of sources, including paint chips, aerosolized paint secondary to construction or remodeling, batteries, drapery weights, fishing sinkers, buckshot, plumbing solder, caulking, pottery, lubricants, contaminated soil, and pesticides such as lead arsenate.

Symptoms

- Anorexia
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Colic, abdominal pain
- Behavioral changes/ neurologic changes
- Blindness
- Seizures
- Coma

Toxicity

There is species variation with respect to susceptibility to lead. Lead interferes with normal functioning of the nervous system, the gastrointestinal tract, and the production of red blood cells. It can also permanently damage the kidneys.

Diagnosis

Although lead poisoning is definitively diagnosed by measuring the lead level in the blood, other blood and urine tests, combined with x-ray identification of metallic foreign material in the intestines and changes in the bones, can help confirm the diagnosis of lead poisoning.

Treatment

Treatment is based on removing the lead from the animal's body. This can require surgical removal of any metallic foreign material seen on x-rays, and may include binding the lead in the body with special drugs (known as chelators). Fluid therapy can help eliminate the lead more quickly from the body. Finally, eliminating environmental exposure is essential to prevent repeat contamination

Prognosis

The prognosis in cases of lead poisoning is good, unless there is severe damage to the kidneys or nervous system.