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Summer Newsletter 2012

Lily Intoxication in Cats

Although lilies are commonly used in flower arrangements, and cats often have access to them, most cat owners and florists are unaware of lily intoxication as a potential cause of kidney failure in cats.

The toxic substance in lilies that injures the kidneys has not been identified, but **ALL** parts of the lily are poisonous – flowers, stamen, stem, leaves and roots.

The toxic dose is unknown, but thought to be reached by ingestion of, or mouthing, very small amounts of material.

Signs of lily poisoning

First signs of toxicity are vomiting, depression and loss of appetite. The onset is usually within 2 hours, and may subside by 12 hours. Although an affected cat is likely to remain depressed, they may appear to improve, briefly (with or without symptomatic treatment) as the gastrointestinal signs abate. It is likely, however, that acute kidney failure will develop within 24 to 72 hours at which time the cat will become critically ill and if left untreated, cats die in 3 to 7 days.



Cats seem to be unique amongst domestic pets in their susceptibility to this intoxication, possibly due to differences in metabolism. For the same sort of reason, cats also can be easily poisoned by human medications such as paracetamol, ibuprofen and aspirin, and these too are lethal for cats in doses that would be safe for humans.

Interestingly, dogs that consume large amounts of the plant develop only mild gastrointestinal signs, while rats and rabbits show no signs of toxicity at all.

FUN CAT FACTS:

Did you know?
Sir Isaac Newton invented the cat door.





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“Tingle” – A real team effort.

During spring and summer, it is not at all unusual for us to be treating lots of cats for cat-fight-related injuries. Mostly, cats that have been beaten up by one of their rivals end up with painful bite wounds that can develop into abscesses or generalised fever. Often, these cats have been left to wait for a few days before treatment is sought.

Tingle was on the losing end of a fight but his injuries were far worse than the norm. He was in a fight late on a Friday night and when he still couldn't open his eye on Saturday morning, his owners decided to visit us right away. When we saw Tingle, it was obvious that his eye was quite badly damaged. There was iris (the coloured part of the eye) protruding from a laceration to the dorsal (top part) of his cornea. This sort of injury is intensely painful and if not treated promptly will most certainly result in horrific infection and loss of the eye. Thanks to his owners' prompt action, we could perform the delicate surgery required to save Tingle's eye on Saturday afternoon and by the end of the weekend, he went home a much happier cat.

Post-surgery, Tingle still needed aggressive medical treatment to reduce inflammation within the eye (as this could have led to glaucoma and loss of the eye) and to prevent infection setting in. His owners were very diligent in administering the medication, despite Tingle's protestations... Now that the sutures have completely dissolved, we can confidently say he has made a full recovery with excellent vision, not to mention preserving his very handsome face!

