Prevention of permethrin poisoning

- Never use a flea treatment on your cat that is intended for use only on dogs.
- Consult your vet for advice on the treatment of fleas.
- Read the instructions on any flea treatment before use.
- If you have applied a permethrin spot-on in error and your cat is well, wash the area thoroughly with shampoo (if possible) and contact your vet immediately.
- If you also have a dog that needs treatment for fleas, contact your vet for advice on using a flea treatment that is also safe for cats.

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.
- 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:

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.
Exposure either through skin contact or from ingestion of a permethrin-containing product may result in toxicity in a cat. It may take a few hours or longer before signs of toxicity become apparent. The clinical signs of permethrin poisoning can include:

- Drooling
- Vomiting
- Incoordination
- Hyperexcitability
- Tremor
- Twitching
- Convulsions
- Increased body temperature

How is permethrin poisoning treated?

- If your cat has been exposed to permethrin – contact your vet immediately.
- If exposure was on the skin then it will be necessary to wash your cat to prevent further absorption.
- Further treatments may include cooling measures and drugs to control drooling and convulsions.
- Administration of lipid therapy (where a fatty emulsion is given into the vein) may also be used in some cases.

Outcome of permethrin poisoning

The outcome may be good if treatment is prompt, with decontamination and control of convulsions, however cats can die from permethrin poisoning.

Sources of permethrin

One of the most common ways cats are poisoned with permethrin is from the exposure to flea spot-on products intended for use in dogs. Exposure in cats can occur from using such products directly on a cat or from secondary exposure. This can occur when a cat is exposed during contact with a treated dog as they may lick or groom the product off the dog. Although the volume in these products is small they contain a high concentration of permethrin.

What are the signs of permethrin poisoning?

Exposure to permethrin in cats can cause a variety of clinical signs. The signs may include:

- Drooling
- Vomiting
- Incoordination
- Hyperexcitability
- Tremor
- Twitching
- Convulsions
- Increased body temperature

What is permethrin?

Permethrin is an insecticide used in household and veterinary products to control insect pests. Cats are very sensitive to permethrin as they are unable to metabolize or eliminate it from the body.