



Marijuana & Your Pet

What are the Facts?

Since Washington legalized marijuana, veterinarians are seeing an increase in the number of pets presenting for accidental ingestion of marijuana. Here is important information about marijuana for you and your pet.

Can marijuana harm my pet?

Dogs and cats are much more sensitive to the effects of marijuana than humans. Cases of marijuana overdose have increased at veterinary emergency clinics because of pets accidentally ingesting marijuana-laced substances. Especially with the increasing use of “edibles,” food stuffs containing marijuana, it is easy for a pet to receive a large dose accidentally.

However, breathing smoke or eating plant material also can cause an overdose. Combination of marijuana with chocolate is particularly dangerous and requires immediate veterinary attention.

What are the signs of marijuana overdose?

Signs usually appear within 30-60 minutes, and can include:

- Lethargy or excitation
- Stumbling, incoordination
- Urinary incontinence (dribbling)
- Glassy eyes, dilated pupils
- Vomiting
- Tremors and seizures
- Coma

What do I do if I think my pet is overdosed on marijuana?

The best thing to do is call your veterinarian or an emergency veterinary clinic. Be up front about the fact that your pet may have been exposed to marijuana, as that will help speed the treatment of your pet. Initially, your pet may be made to vomit to reduce absorption of the material, or fed activated charcoal to bind the remaining substance.

While rarely fatal, animals may need to be hospitalized and put on IV fluids, given medication to reduce vomiting, and if enough is eaten, may even need ventilator support to help them continue to breathe. There is no “antidote” for marijuana, so treatment is largely supportive until the marijuana leaves the system.

Can't marijuana help my pet? Aren't people taking it for pain, nausea, cancer?

Because pets are more sensitive to marijuana, more research needs to be done on what a “safe” and “effective” dose would be.

Also, it is currently illegal for a veterinarian to prescribe any marijuana substances for a pet.

Still Have Questions?

For more information, please contact the WSVMA at (425) 396-3191 or visit wsvma.org.

Washington State
Veterinary Medical Association
wsvma.org