



media *release*

Thursday 24 October 2013

MARSHAL'S LEGACY: PET OWNERS URGED TO BE AWARE OF ANTIFREEZE POISONING DURING WINTER MONTHS

The Animal Health Trust (AHT) is urging pet owners to familiarise themselves with the signs of antifreeze poisoning in their pets to avoid unnecessary deaths.

As winter approaches, more and more people will be topping up the antifreeze coolant levels in their vehicles, and just a few spilt drops can cause serious harm to cats and dogs.

Key signs to stay vigilant for in your pet include:

- Vomiting
- Seizures (fits)
- Increased urination
- Excessive drinking.

The dangerous toxin found commonly in antifreeze, ethylene glycol, has a sweet taste tempting animals to ingest the substance, should they find it on their paws or in an easily accessible place. Antifreeze poisoning is a serious condition and can quickly lead to the death of a pet if treatment isn't accessed quickly.

The warning comes following the news that an AHT staff member's cat, which had ingested the substance, has sadly died.

Veterinary Nurse, Jody Blyth-Tancock returned home to find her eight-year-old Bengal-cross, Marshal, acting strangely, displaying a severe stiffness in his posture.

Jody examined Marshal for any obvious problems i.e. cuts, bruises etc., but with no clear issues she suspected he had a sprain, most likely from a fall, and kept Marshal indoors overnight to monitor his behaviour.

Over the course of the next 24 hours, Marshal did not improve and despite eating normally, he was also vomiting. Jody brought Marshal to the AHT's Small Animal Centre as quickly as possible for further examinations and blood tests.

Tests revealed that Marshal's renal values were incredibly high, indicating that Marshal had ingested ethylene glycol and that his kidneys were giving up.

Over the next few hours Marshal was given fluid therapy at a high-rate to help his body recover. However, by this point his kidneys had completely stopped functioning, and the heart-breaking decision was made to euthanase him, to avoid any further suffering.

"Poor Marshal's passing came as such a shock for so many reasons," explains Jody. "The last thing I would have suspected was antifreeze poisoning, particularly as the cold weather was yet to hit. It was heart-breaking to watch him deteriorate so rapidly, and highlights how quickly you have to act when poisoning is suspected.

"I just hope that Marshal's death will not be in vain and his story will help to avoid other animals suffering the same fate, and save other pet owners from suffering the heartbreak of losing their beloved pet."

If you suspect your pet has ingested a poisonous substance it is advised to contact your vet as quickly as possible.

The AHT also encourages car owners to use propylene glycol antifreeze where possible. Whilst it is still poisonous to animals, it is a lot less harmful than the ethylene glycol version more regularly used.

To ensure you're not responsible for antifreeze poisoning in animals, please keep your car checked regularly for leaks, and keep antifreeze bottles out of the reach of pets.

Ends

For further information, please contact:

Georgie Shevki, AHT press office, 01638 555602

Photographs:

Images of Marshal and an infographic highlighting the dangers of antifreeze poisoning in pets, can be requested from the AHT press office.

Additional notes:

The **Animal Health Trust** is a veterinary charity fighting disease and injury in animals. It employs more than 230 scientists, vets and support workers and aims to improve the health and welfare of horses, dogs and cats through research. It also provides specialist referral services and continuous education to vets. Visit our website at www.aht.org.uk