

The ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center Alerts Dog Owners To Important Information Regarding West Nile Virus

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APCC PROVIDES PROTECTION INFORMATION AGAINST THE VIRUS AND AGENTS USED TO STOP THE DISEASE

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(NEW YORK) September 23, 2002 -- Dog owners may express concern regarding the risks of their pets contracting West Nile Virus (WNV) from mosquitoes. The ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center is providing the following information regarding WNV in an effort to help educate dog owners on the risks associated with WNV and the agents that may be used to repel mosquitoes.

- There have been very few reported cases of WNV-related disease in dogs, which reflects the fact that they are not very susceptible to the virus. The vast majority of dogs are not in any danger of contracting the disease associated with WNV.
- For dog owners who wish to minimize their dog's exposure to mosquitoes that can carry diseases such as heartworm disease and WNV, the following suggestions are made:
 - Keep pets indoors during times when mosquitoes are most active. These times are dawn, dusk and early evening.
 - Eliminate areas of standing water that can be breeding grounds for mosquitoes. Empty and re-fill outdoor water bowls daily to prevent mosquitoes from using them to lay their eggs.
 - Many pyrethrin-based flea control products for pets are also labeled to kill or repel mosquitoes and may be used on dogs. Be sure to read and follow the label instructions exactly.
 - The use of products containing DEET (N, N-diethyl-meta-toluamide) on pets is NOT recommended. Dogs (and cats) are very sensitive to DEET and may develop neurologic problems if DEET-containing products are applied to them.
 - The use of products containing concentrated essential oils such as tea tree oil (melaleuca oil), pennyroyal oil, and d-limonene is also not recommended. Concentrates of these products can cause serious health problems in pets, such as weakness, paralysis, liver injury, and seizures. Besides, the effectiveness of these products in repelling mosquitoes is not proven.

If an owner suspects that a pesticide has poisoned their pet, they can contact the ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center at (888) 426-4355. For more information about WNV and ensuring your pet's good health, contact your veterinarian and visit the American Veterinary Medical Association's Web site at <http://www.avma.org/>.

<http://www.aspc.org/site/News2?page=NewsArticle&id=10900>

I work in a pet store, and a customer told me that tea tree oil, often used for flea control, can be toxic to pets. Could I get more information about this?
—Laura G.

Tea tree, or *Melaleuca alternifolia* oil, does have toxic potential, depending on the circumstances of exposure. Clinical effects that may occur following dermal exposure to significant amounts of tea tree oil include loss of coordination, muscle weakness, depression, and possibly even a severe drop in body temperature, collapse and liver damage. If the oil is ingested, potential effects include vomiting, diarrhea and, in some cases, seizures. If inhalation of the oil occurs, aspiration pneumonia is possible.

When it comes to flea control, we always recommend that pet owners consult with their veterinarian to get advice on the proper product to use, based on the individual pet's species, age, size and health history. Additionally, reading the label first and following the product's directions exactly are key in helping to avoid any potentially problematic situation.

http://www.asPCA.org/site/PageServer?pagename=pro_apcc_ask_archive