

Antiparasitics products for dogs containing permethrin must not be used for cats



Permethrin is a chemical insecticide belonging to the pyrethroid class. It is found in over 80 veterinary medicines authorised for sale in France, used to prevent and treat flea and tick infestations in dogs.

With the return of spring, many pet owners are buying topical antiparasitics to treat their animals. These medicines, which are available from pharmacies, veterinary clinics, supermarkets, garden centres, and pet stores, must not be used on cats.

Permethrin is toxic for cats. It can cause neurological disorders (tremors, seizures, ataxia, agitation, coma), sometimes combined with other symptoms, such as hypersalivation or vomiting. The reason for this toxicity in cats has not been fully elucidated, but it seems to be linked to delayed elimination of the molecule and/or its metabolites.

Just a few drops from a pipette can be enough to induce serious adverse effects or even kill the most sensitive animals, including cats.

Accidents are still happening despite the warnings

In recent years, as part of the veterinary pharmacovigilance scheme operated through the French Agency for Veterinary Medicinal Products, ANSES has recorded a number of serious or even fatal adverse reactions in cats treated with topical permethrin-based antiparasitics, intended for dogs. Since 2006, the Agency has implemented communication measures, targeting vets and pet owners, and has also changed the labelling of the products to warn of their absolute contraindication for cats. A campaign in 2013 was fol-

lowed by a fall in the number of cases of poisoning reported. Nevertheless, accidents are still happening (see Figure 1). In 2018, the Agency recorded 122 cases of adverse reactions in cats following administration of permethrin-based products. Of these 122 reports, 54 were deemed serious and six cats died following the use of these antiparasitic medicines authorised for dogs.

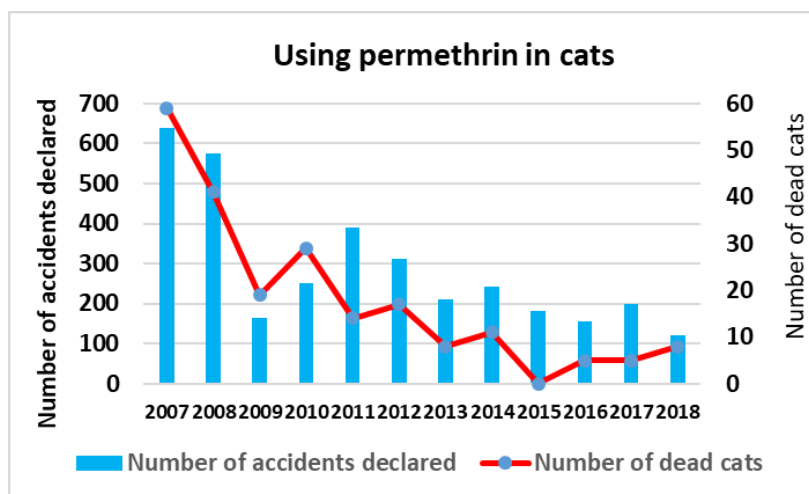


Figure 1 : Cases of feline poisoning by permethrin

Tips to avoid poisoning

This context has led ANSES to remind cat owners not to treat their pets with veterinary drugs containing permethrin, intended for dogs.

In the event of accidental exposure, and even if adverse reactions have not yet occurred, owners should wash their cat with warm water and soap or washing-up liquid, and seek veterinary advice without delay.

To prevent cats from being accidentally exposed to these products in homes with more than one type of animal, owners should keep treated dogs away from cats until the site where the antiparasitic treatment has been applied to the dog is dry, and make sure that cats cannot lick it.



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Where should reports be made?

To report an adverse reaction following the use of a veterinary drug

<https://pharmacovigilance-anmv.anses.fr/>

TO FIND OUT MORE, READ THE:

Meg-Anne Moriceau, Jennifer Blondeau, Élodie Adamczyk, Stéphane Queffélec - La perméthrine – Le point vétérinaire - Mars 2018 / N° 383