



CANADIAN VETERINARY  
MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

L'ASSOCIATION CANADIENNE  
DES MÉDECINS VÉTÉRINAIRES

## SIGNS OF CANNABIS EXPOSURE IN YOUR PETS

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Your pet may inadvertently be exposed to cannabis residue that has been dropped on the ground or left on a surface, even if you do not use it, with the use of medical marijuana on the rise.

Pets can also suffer from second-hand smoke inhalation from exposure to smoke from medical or recreational cannabis products.

### **Signs of excess cannabis exposure in pets include:**

- Sleepiness
- Depression
- Wobbling, pacing and agitation
- Sound or light sensitivity
- Inappropriate urination
- Dilated pupils
- Vomiting
- Bloodshot eyes
- Salivation
- Fast or slow heart rates
- Low body temperature
- Vocalization

Seizures, coma and death rarely may occur at high doses. Signs of THC (tetrahydrocannabinol, the main psychoactive compound) toxicity may occur within one or two hours of ingestion and signs may resolve by the following day.

Dog deaths have been rarely reported, but an American study in 2012 reported two dogs died after eating medical grade THC-containing butter.

THC-rich products can be added to other products such as brownies. This could produce a double risk because of the THC and the chocolate; the latter is also toxic to pets.

## **If you Suspect your Pet has been Exposed**

If you suspect your pet has been exposed to something they should not have, take them to a veterinary hospital immediately for professional care.

Veterinarians can induce vomiting which may prevent clinical signs of toxicity from developing. If your pet is already showing clinical signs they may require hospitalization and supportive care. Do not be afraid to tell the veterinarian your pet has accidentally ingested marijuana products, as not knowing this can make managing your pet's case difficult. As per privacy laws, be assured they will not contact the police.

Treatment may include inducing vomiting, administering activated charcoal, intravenous fluids and intralipid therapy. Intralipid is an intravenous fat emulsion that can bind toxins to help eliminate them.

Further research is recommended to understand the safety and efficacy of cannabis in veterinary medicine. For now, cannabis is not approved for medical use in animals and giving THC products to your pet could put them in a life-threatening medical crisis.

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