

Marijuana Poisoning in Dogs

Our topics for this week are:

- **Dogs exposure to marijuana**
- **Signs of marijuana poisoning in dogs**
- **Cannabidiol treatment of anxiety in dogs**

The medical use of marijuana to treat lack of appetite, pain, and vomiting from anticancer chemotherapy has been allowed for several years.

Earlier this month, Missouri voters passed Amendment 3 approving the recreational use of marijuana. It joined 20 other states that now have recreational use of marijuana. Arkansas, North and South Dakota had similar measures on their ballots which they rejected. There will be 144 new small business licenses. New license holders will be selected by a lottery.

Incidence

States that have previously approved the recreational use of marijuana have seen a dramatic increase in marijuana poisoning in pets, especially dogs. The national Pet Poison Helpline has had more than a 4-fold increase in calls about marijuana poisoning in dogs over a 6 year period.

Exposure

Poisoning is usually from a dog's accidental or intentional access to food or drink laced with marijuana. Baked foods are most common. However, exposure can also be from inhalation of secondary smoke, ingestion of hashish oil, or eating the feces of another intoxicated dog. The amount and strength of marijuana in food products is not regulated by the government.

Signs

Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) is the psychoactive substance that causes the "high" in people. Dogs have more cannabinoid receptors in their brain and are much more sensitive to it than humans. The signs of marijuana poisoning in dogs include:

- Stumbling
- Crossing over of front legs
- Lethargy or agitation
- Dilated pupils
- Dribbling of urine
- Vomiting
- Tremors, shaking, seizures, and coma

Treatment of Poisoning

There is no antidote for marijuana poisoning. Treatment is to induce vomiting, if it was ingested; use enemas; intravenous fluids.

Prevention

Do not have marijuana in the house or keep all marijuana products or laced foods on high cabinets or locked drawers.

Intentional exposure of dogs to marijuana is animal abuse which can be a Class E felony in Missouri.

Cannabidiol in Pets

Cannabidiol (CBD) is one of more than 100 cannabinoids in the *Cannabis sativa* (marijuana) plant. If purified, it does not have the psychoactivity of tetrahydrocannabinol (THC). CBD is marketed as a calming and pain-relieving agent but independent controlled efficacy studies are lacking. Because the regulation of cannabis products in the U.S. is a fluid, conflicting, and confusing mess, false claims of medicinal effects and mislabeled products containing little to no CBH are common. There is no reliable assurance of the efficacy, safety, purity, or reliability of CBD products for dogs. CBD acid is a precursor of CBD with similar effects+.

Cannabidiol extracted from marijuana has been classified by federal law since the 1970s as a Schedule I Controlled Substance. It is not approved by the FDA as a prescription drug or a dietary supplement. However, some states have passed laws to allow CBD sales while federal enforcement of sales as a federally controlled drug is inexplicably ignored.

If you have comments or you're interested in particular animal handling subjects, contact us at CBC@BetterAnimalHandling.com

Now let's recap the key points to remember from today's episode:

- 1. Dogs are more sensitive to marijuana than humans.**
- 2. Marijuana can cause urinary incontinence, staggering, vomiting, seizures, and death in dogs.**
- 3. CBD products for dogs are unregulated and may be ineffective, unreliable, or unsafe.**

More information on animal handling can be found in my book, *Animal Handling and Physical Restraint*, published by CRC Press and available on Amazon and from many other fine book supply sources. My new spiral-bound handbook, *Concise Textbook of Small Animal Handling* was recently published and available from all major science book supply sources.

Additional information is provided at: www.betteranimalhandling.com . This website has more than 150 past podcasts with notes on handling of dogs, cats, other small mammals, birds, reptiles, horses, cattle, small ruminants, swine, and poultry.

Don't forget, serious injury or death can result from handling and restraining some animals. Safe and effective handling and restraint requires experience and continual practice. Acquisition of the needed skills should be under the supervision of an experienced animal handler.