

Marijuana Intoxication

Pets are notorious for getting into things they are not supposed to and marijuana is no exception. Exposures are becoming more common with the increasing use of medicinal marijuana products being used in people. Fortunately, THC (the active component of marijuana) has a high margin of safety when ingested making the risk for serious complications in pets very low.



What happens when my pet ingests marijuana?

Pets typically begin to show signs associated with marijuana exposure within an hour with the most common including depression, incoordination, dilated pupils, a glazed appearance, sound/light sensitivity, and sometimes urine leakage. Depending on the dose, signs may last for as little as a few hours up to several days with the average being about 24 hours in duration.

So my pet got into marijuana, what do we do about it?

Fortunately, nearly all pets with exposure to marijuana simply need time to allow the effects to wear off. Treatments done either as an outpatient or during a brief hospital stay include placement in a quiet area, hydration support and relief of nausea if present. If a pet ingests so much marijuana that they are severely depressed to comatose, they are definitely hospitalized and placed on IV fluids. More advanced therapies like IV lipids and oxygen support can also be considered in severe cases.

Has a dog or cat ever died from marijuana exposure?

There are two reported cases of dogs ingesting marijuana-infused butter that subsequently died with the suspicion that it was related to the intoxication. THC dissolves readily in fats (like butter) which means dogs only need to ingest a small amount of butter to receive a large amount of THC.