

# PAWS & POISONS

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE ANIMAL POISONS CENTRE

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APRIL, 2020, ISSUE 1

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## SUCCESSFUL LAUNCH

On the 31st of December 2019, we opened our free public helpline for pet owners. The purpose of this helpline is to provide owners with triage advice and basic poisons first aid measures that can be performed at home. Our free helpline can quickly determine whether a pet can be observed at home, or if it would be more appropriate to have the animal immediately assessed by a veterinarian.

With our public hotline established, it was not long before we began receiving calls from veterinarians and other members of veterinary teams for advice on managing poisoned animals.

The Animal Poisons Centre's official 24-hour member only service began on the 1st of March 2020 and has since been helping veterinary teams across the country with the management of their poisoned patients.

In our first 3 months of service, our Specialists in Poisons Information have helped over 1,200 animals and 150 veterinary clinics with poisons advice. We can confirm that dogs really will get into just about anything!



## RAPID MUSHROOM IDENTIFICATION SERVICE

The Animal Poisons Centre is excited to announce the introduction of our fungi identification service. The service aims to assist in the management of fungi poisonings by providing a prompt risk assessment of all exposures. Identification by an experienced mycologist will prompt early intervention and management where appropriate. In most cases, we will be able to identify the fungi down to a genus level within one hour of the request.

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We know that your team is likely struggling to obtain hand sanitiser to keep your staff and clients healthy and safe during the COVID-19 pandemic. As we have pharmacists on staff at the Animal Poisons Centre we thought we would share with you instructions on how you can make your own medical-grade hand sanitiser in the event your clinic runs out.



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## MYCOLOGIST MUSHROOM IDENTIFICATION SERVICE

APC MEMBERS	NON MEMBERS
<b>\$130</b>	<b>\$230</b>
ex GST	ex GST

IDENTIFICATION BY EXPERT MYCOLOGISTS  
MOST RESULTS RECEIVED WITHIN 1 HOUR  
INCLUDES TOXICOLOGY CASE ADVICE

The cost of the service, which will include the identification and case advice is \$230 EX GST for non-member clinics and only \$130 EX GST for member clinics. Most results are received within 1 hour. Conditions Apply.

 **AU TOX PET**   
1300 869 738

 **NZ TOX PET**   
0800 869 738

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With a change of seasons around the corner, we have noticed a significant increase in the number of calls to the Animal Poisons Centre regarding wild mushroom ingestion. Australia is home to over 10,000 species of mushrooms and whilst only a small percentage of those are known to be poisonous, it is important to treat all mushroom ingestions as potentially harmful until proven otherwise.

Depending on the species, consumption of a poisonous mushroom can cause various clinical signs ranging from mild gastrointestinal signs to fulminant liver failure and death. Proper care of an animal that has ingested a wild mushroom can seem like a daunting task. In these cases, a mycologist can prove invaluable as accurate identification of the fungus helps guide the path to appropriate treatment, improved outcomes, and a more refined prognosis.

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FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT THE  
ANIMAL POISONS CENTRE

[WWW.ANIMALPOISONS.COM.AU](http://WWW.ANIMALPOISONS.COM.AU)



## ORGANOCHLORINE SUPRISE

One of our member clinics contacted our service after receiving a call from an owner regarding their dog that had ingested Poly Paint Stripper. The can had been knocked over in the owners shed and their 2-year-old Border Collie was found licking from the puddle. This had just happened 10 minutes prior to the call, and apart from some drooling the dog appeared well. The veterinarian wanted to check if the animal needed to come into the clinic. Poly Paint Stripper contains 870 g/L dichloromethane (as well as lower concentrations of ethanol and ammonium hydroxide). The pH of the solution is 10. The pH determined that the product would likely be an irritant alkali rather than result in corrosive injury. Of much greater concern, dichloromethane (otherwise known as methylene chloride) can result in profound toxicity, even from relatively small ingestions.

The initial effects are primarily CNS depression, however as the parent compound is metabolised endogenously into carbon monoxide, cellular hypoxia ensues (similar to carbon monoxide inhalation). The veterinarian was advised that the mouth should be rinsed or wiped out, and immediate clinic assessment and observation was necessary. Gastrointestinal decontamination was not recommended as the liquid is a volatile aspiration hazard (and it is rapidly absorbed from the GI tract). There is no specific antidote, however the veterinarian was advised that supplemental oxygen effectively reduces the half-life of carbon monoxide and should be administered to the animal if they develop any CNS signs or signs of hypoxemia.



## DON'T JUDGE A BOOK BY ITS COVER

Recently, our service was asked to provide assistance for a Labrador that had chewed through the packaging of a herbicide called Yates tree and blackberry killer. The owner had brought the chewed up 250ml bottle into the clinic and the label revealed the herbicide to be Triclopyr. The vet decided to contact us as they were unable to find useful information regarding triclopyr toxicity and the dog appeared depressed. We were glad to be contacted as a quick search revealed that the active herbicide is diluted in a highly concentrated diethylene glycol monoethyl ether solution. Diethylene glycol monoethyl ether and other toxic alcohols cause CNS effects similar to those of ethanol however, significant toxicity is a consequence of accumulation of metabolites.

Progressively severe signs develop over the subsequent hours as metabolism progresses and lactic acidosis worsens. Ingestion of toxic glycols are potentially life threatening and require prompt decontamination via induced emesis, use of appropriate antidotes, supportive care and even haemodialysis. In this case, as the dog was already showing signs of intoxication immediate ethanol therapy was initiated. Ethanol competitively blocks the formation of toxic metabolites in toxic alcohol ingestions by having a higher affinity for the enzyme alcohol dehydrogenase. Fortunately, due to rapid product recognition and early treatment, there was a positive outcome.



# GUIDE TO PRODUCTION OF WHO RECOMMENDED HAND SANITISER

REFERENCE:  
[HTTPS://WWW.WHO.INT/GPSC/5MAY/GUIDE\\_TO\\_LOCAL\\_PRODUCTION.PDF](https://www.who.int/gpsc/5may/guide_to_local_production.pdf)

## WHO

### TO PREPARE 1 LITRE

Methylated Spirits (95 % Ethanol) - 833 ml  
Hydrogen Peroxide 3 % - 42 ml  
Glycerol/Glycerin - 15 ml  
Sterile Water - to 1000 ml

## HOW

1. Using a funnel, pour the methylated spirits into a 1 litre sterile bottle marked at 1 litre.
2. Add the Hydrogen peroxide using a measuring cylinder.
3. Add the glycerol using a measuring cylinder. As glycerol is very viscous and sticks to the wall of the measuring cylinder, it should be rinsed with some sterile distilled or cold boiled water and then emptied into the final bottle.
4. Add sterile water upto the 1 litre mark.
5. Close the lid and gently mix the contents.

### LABELLING

- For External Use Only
- Composition and Volume
- Avoid contact with eyes
- Keep out of the reach of children
- Date of production and batch number
- Use: Apply alcohol-based handrub and cover all surfaces of the hands. Rub hands until dry
- Flammable: keep away from flame and heat

## WHY

### METHYLATED SPIRITS

In Australia, methylated spirits is denatured ethanol 95-99% with the addition of a denaturant such as Bitrex. Methylated spirits can be used as rubbing alcohol when diluted down to 70-80%.

### GLYCEROL

Glycerol is added as a humectant to increase the acceptability of the product. Other humectants or emollients may be used for skin care, provided that they are miscible (mixable) in water and alcohol, non-toxic, and hypoallergenic. Glycerol has been chosen because it is safe and relatively inexpensive. Lowering the percentage of glycerol may be considered to further reduce stickiness of the handrub.

### H2O2

The low concentration of H2O2 is intended to help eliminate contaminating spores in the bulk solutions and recipients and is not an active substance for hand antiseptics.

### WATER

While sterile distilled water is preferred for making the formulations, boiled and cooled tap water may also be used as long as it is free of visible particulates.

### FRAGRANCES

The addition of fragrances is not recommended because of the risk of allergic reactions.



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