

Transcript:

Induced Vomiting

Hi, this is Dr. Karen Becker, and we're going to discuss how and when to make your dog throw up. It sounds like a terrible topic, but actually a common question I get at the hospital is, "How and when do I make my dog throw up?" It's better to be safe than sorry, and better to have the knowledge before you need it than when you're in the middle of crisis.

If you have a dog or cat and if he's prone to consuming odd things around your house, watch this video now so you'll know exactly what to do to and you have hydrogen peroxide on hand to induce vomiting when you need to.

So you see your dog or cat consume something. Do you automatically make your dog or cat throw up? Not necessarily. Sometimes animals come up from the basement, and they're chewing something. Sometimes you see them in the yard – or maybe behind the garage – and they come around the corner chewing something. Sometimes cats consume plants, and you see that there are bite or chew marks on the plant. You don't automatically have to induce vomiting.

When to Induce Vomiting

What are the instances when you don't have to induce vomiting? First, when he's already throwing up. Do NOT induce vomiting when your pet's already throwing up because you can incite a worse vomition response. Number two, if your pet has lost consciousness – if she's really weak, has trouble breathing, or is too weak to stand – do NOT induce vomiting, because aspiration pneumonia (where a dog breathes vomit into his lungs) can become a secondary problem.

The third reason that you would not automatically induce vomiting is if your pet has swallowed bleach, drain cleaners, or petroleum distillates. Those are things that can induce burns as they are swallowed, and additional, secondary burns as they come back up, so you don't induce vomiting if your pet has consumed caustic substances.

The fourth reason that you don't automatically induce vomiting is if it has been over two hours since your pet ingested the potential toxin. Once substances have entered the small intestine, inducing vomiting does not clear the stomach of those toxins. Inducing vomiting after your pet has already digested the potential product or toxin won't be effective.

When do you induce vomiting? When your pet has consumed antifreeze and it's been within two hours, automatically induce vomiting. The other time to induce vomiting is when you call your veterinarian, discuss the specific circumstances around your pet consuming a potential toxin, and your vet instructs you to induce vomiting.

Use Hydrogen Peroxide

Your veterinarian will probably tell you (as I recommend) that the only substance that we recommend home-induced vomiting with is hydrogen peroxide. It's three percent hydrogen peroxide that you can purchase at the pharmacy. Do not use the stronger concentrated hair coloring peroxide – you can only use three percent peroxide. The dose is one teaspoon or five milliliters for every 10 pounds of body weight. You can give that orally.

At my hospital, we mix it with a little vanilla ice cream. We don't advocate feeding ice cream to dogs regularly, but it's highly palatable and sugary so that animals will consume it readily. Sometimes we just syringe it down the pet's throat, and with cats it's better to just syringe it. Dogs will often voluntarily take it if it's hidden in a little bit of something sweet. You can also use a little bit of honey or you can use a syringe to get it down your pet.

If it's a dog, we recommend that you walk your dog around for a few minutes to try and get movement, and vomiting usually occurs within 15 minutes. Cats don't oftentimes like to walk around, but try to keep them up and encourage absorption of that hydrogen peroxide.

Hydrogen peroxide is an irritant to the gastrointestinal tract, so it will induce vomiting of the contents of the stomach within 15 minutes. If your pet doesn't vomit within 15 minutes, you can repeat the process. This means you can give a second dose. However, if another 15 minutes has passed and your pet has still not vomited, you need to not repeat the process. Call your veterinarian.

Veterinarians have specific drugs that can be given – apomorphine for dogs and xylazine for cats. These are by prescription only and administered by veterinarians only. They can be much more effective at inducing vomiting if your home remedy of hydrogen peroxide doesn't work. If your pet doesn't vomit, it's important that you seek veterinary care immediately.