



## SEASONAL PAW PRINT

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### Toxic Algae

(Marlborough District Council)

Areas of toxic algae are starting to show up in some of Marlborough's streams and parents and dog owners are being warned that it may pose a health risk to children and animals.

Council staff have spotted high concentrations of the algae in parts of the Omaka River and the Wairau River. While Council has placed warning signs at some of the access points it is important people are aware of the algae and

that it could be present in other areas, not just those signposted.

Not all river sites are monitored so if the bed of a river is covered in thick brown or black mats that have a velvety texture and an earthy or musty smell, it is wise to be cautious and avoid that river site.

The toxins in the algae have the greatest effect on dogs, which are attracted to the smell and can die after eating the algae. While there have been no reports of dog deaths from this cause in Marlborough, there have been cases in the Nelson-Tasman region and people need to be aware of the risk. **If you think your dog has eaten toxic algae take it to a vet immediately.**

In humans, contact with toxic algae can cause vomiting, diarrhoea and skin irritation. It is therefore important to keep children and dogs away from the algae; avoid touching it or swimming near it. Algal mats may be floating at the river's edge or in shallow water or attached to rocks in fast-flowing parts of a river.

Toxic algae are naturally occurring. They are particularly prolific in summer when longer days and higher temperatures provide good growing conditions. In Marlborough the most common toxic algae are Phormidium. They form dark brown mats growing on rocks in the river bed and are mainly found in fast flowing water, such as riffles. When algae mats become very thick they start to detach from the rocks and float in the water, accumulating along the edges of the river. This is when the algae present the greatest risk to recreational users and dogs.

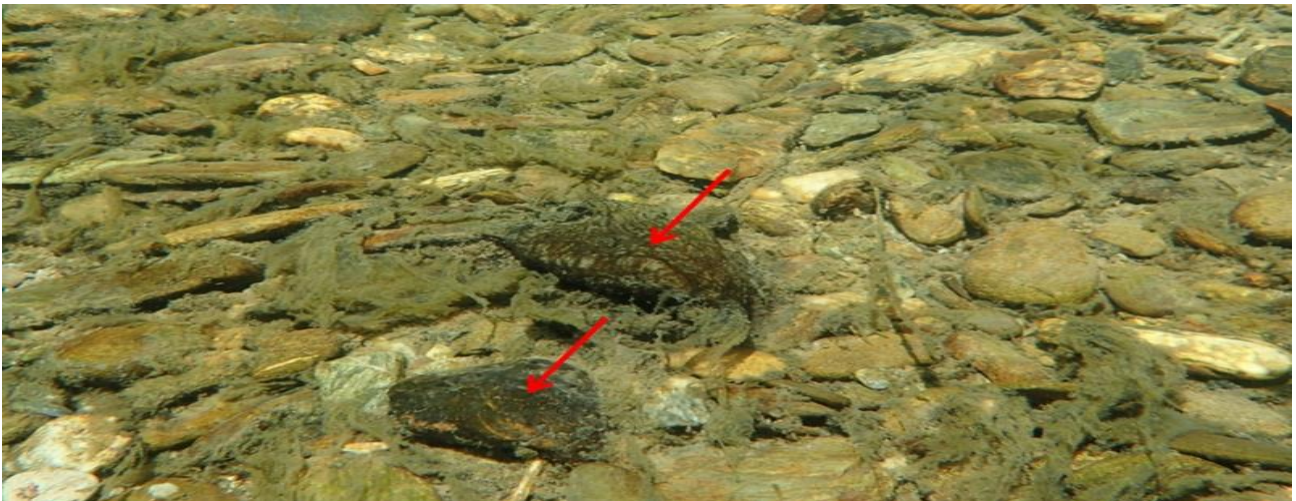
The algae have a musty smell that dogs are attracted to. As little as an area of a 50 cent piece can be fatal to a dog when digested. The neural toxins produced by the algae cause **muscular twitching, paralysis and convulsion**. **If your dog shows any of these symptoms after spending time in a river, take it to the vet immediately.** In extreme cases, death can occur within 30 minutes after the first symptoms are noticeable. Small children are also at risk as they might accidentally ingest the algae when playing in the water. In a number of neighbouring regions toxic algae mats have caused several dog deaths. Although there have been no confirmed cases in Marlborough, we have seen an increase in the occurrence of toxic algae mats in our streams and rivers.

**This is a very wide-spread phenomenon and Council is unable to place warning signs at all sites with toxic algae. It is therefore important that you familiarise yourself with what these algae look like and keep children and dogs away from rivers with toxic algae.**

There are many different kinds of algae that grow in rivers, but toxic algae have a quite distinct appearance.



*Dark brown toxic algae amongst other algae in the Taylor River (arrows). The green and light brown algae are harmless.*



*Toxic algae usually form thicker mats than other algae. The green stringy algae are harmless (Kaituna River).*



*The toxic algae (arrows) is a lot darker in colour than other brown algae (Omaka River).*



*The furry appearance of the smooth algae can be seen in this picture. Note that the algae mat in this picture is starting to detach from the rock (red arrow).*



*This picture shows toxic algae that have detached from the rocks and accumulated along the stream edge. This is particularly dangerous as dogs will be attracted by the musty smell. Small children might also play with the algae and accidentally ingest some of it.*



*Close-up of toxic algae outside of the water. Do not touch the algae without wearing protective gloves.*

# Chocolate Toxicity

Pets are commonly exposed to chocolate particularly around holidays such as Easter, Halloween and Christmas.

## OVERVIEW

Chocolate and cocoa products found in lollies, cakes, cookies, brownies and baking products are highly attractive to pets. They contain toxic compounds referred to as methylxanthines such as theobromine and caffeine that can cause severe illness. The amounts of toxic compounds vary greatly between products with dark chocolate, baking chocolate and cocoa powder holding the highest concentrations.

### Toxic doses of theobromine\*

Mild illness	20mg/kg
Moderate to serious	40mg/kg
Lethal	100-200mg/kg

\*Pets can respond differently to chocolate doses and the type of chocolate ingested, with some dogs more sensitive than others.

### Common signs of a chocolate toxicity:

- Twitching
- Vomiting
- Diarrhoea
- Panting
- Bloat
- Restlessness
- Tremors
- Seizures
- Heart arrhythmias
- Respiratory failure
- Clinical signs usually occur within 6-12 hours of eating the chocolate and can persist for 72 hours in severe cases.
- The half-life of theobromine is 17.5 hours and caffeine is 4.5 hours, which means that it takes that amount of time for half of it to be excreted out of the body.



## Levels of Theobromine



White chocolate contains 0.1mg/g of theobromine

Milk chocolate contains 2mg/kg of theobromine



Baking chocolate or dark chocolate contains 6-16mg/g of theobromine

Cocoa contains 20-30mg/g of theobromine



As an estimate, a 50g block of dark chocolate or baking chocolate (small chocolate bar size) could be fatal to a small dog. Whereas, a small amount of milk chocolate such as the size of a chocolate chip is usually not a problem.

## Estimated doses of chocolate toxicity\*\*

Size of dog	Milk Chocolate	Dark or Baking Chocolate
Small dogs	60-600g	7-70g
Medium dogs	900g-1.5kg	100-200g
Large dogs	2kg+	200-500g

\*\*Based on a toxicity dose of 60g/kg for milk chocolate and 7g/kg for dark chocolate. The amount of theobromine and caffeine will differ between chocolate brands. Always call your veterinary practice and advise them of the amount of chocolate ingested.

### Treatment may include:

- Induced vomiting and removal of gastrointestinal contents
- Stabilisation and supportive care with fluids
- Medication for tremors or seizures

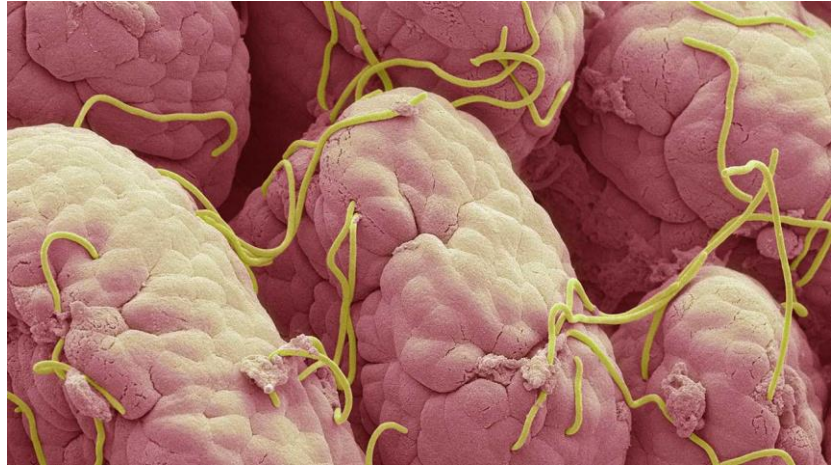
Depending on the level of toxic compounds ingested, most pets will make a full recovery with aggressive veterinary treatment.

### Tips to help prevent chocolate toxicity:

- Keep chocolate out of reach of pets
- Look for dog treats with carob (a chocolate alternative with no theobromine or caffeine)

# Can Children get Pinworms from a Pet Dog or Cat?

Human pinworms (*Enterobius vermicularis*) are intestinal parasitic worms of human hosts. Humans are considered to be the only hosts of *E. vermicularis*: Therefore, human pinworms cannot originate from pets or other animals, or vice versa. Like human pinworms, pinworms found in animals such as horses or rabbits are host-specific.



## In General

Human pinworm infection is spread via the faecal-oral route.

Symptoms of human pinworm infection include itching around the anus, which can cause difficulty sleeping and restlessness; however, some infected humans may not experience any symptoms.

Diagnosis is made by identifying the worm or its eggs.

Worms can sometimes be seen on the skin near the anus or on undergarments, pyjamas or bed sheets.

## Summary

Advice about pinworms is best obtained from a healthcare provider or pharmacist.

Children and adults CANNOT 'catch' a pinworm infection from animals, only from other humans.

HOWEVER, certain dog and cat worms CAN affect humans. Rarely, certain tapeworms (eg *Echinococcus* species, "sheep measles") and, more commonly, roundworms, such as *Toxocara* species, can affect humans if contaminated ground or dog faeces are handled.

In ALL cases, strict observance of good hand hygiene is the most effective means of preventing human pinworm infection/reinfection or infection with dog or cat worms

## 4CYTE for dogs

4CYTE is a natural product with strong supportive trial data that will keep your dog sound and pain free. With the active Epiitalis and supported with green lipped mussel and abalone (Paua) the active Epiitalis has proven to proliferate in the cells of the synovial membrane. This is important as the synovial membrane protects the synovial fluid of the joint, the cartilage and improves overall joint health.

By keeping the synovial membrane intact, the synovial fluid cannot leak into the body and the blood pollution (from the body) cannot enter the joint. We do not want the blood pollution entering the joint as this adds to the joint deterioration as it destroys the cartilage over time.

4CYTE is unique in the way it works. Many users including humans (with our human product), horses (with our Epiitalis Gel) and dogs (4CYTE canine) have had outstanding results. Weekly we get success stories from our patients.

You too can help your dog refrain from pain and improve joint mobility and lameness on 4CYTE canine. Come and see us in the clinic so we can assess your dog today and discuss further the benefits of 4CYTE canine for your dog.



## Furever Friends – Pet Cremation Service



Furever Friends is a local family owned and operated Pet Cremation Service operating in and around the Marlborough region. We understand that your pets are part of your families and are your loved companions. Being pet owners ourselves we know that losing them can be difficult, upsetting and at times overwhelming. We provide a professional, caring and stress free service for the after care of your beloved pet.

We offer individual cremation, which eliminates any contamination or confusion between pets' ashes. Each pet has its own unique cremation log number that will follow your pet right through the cremation process from the vets or your home and back to you. We can also provide a more person service with a home collection option.

Every pets' ashes will be returned in a black cardboard urn, unless you wish to choose from our beautiful mahogany and pine wood urn range that are hand crafted in New Zealand. We also offer an engraving service which we can arrange for you.

If you have any further queries please contact us on: 0277554935, [fureverfriendsmarlborough@hotmail.com](mailto:fureverfriendsmarlborough@hotmail.com), [www.fureverfriendsmarlborough.com](http://www.fureverfriendsmarlborough.com) or speak to us at the clinic on 5786965.



## Grass Seeds - The Summer Menace

Grass seeds have bristly arrow-like fibres that allow them to cling onto your dog's fur, while the pointed shape makes it easy for them to work themselves into their skin. The seeds causing the most problems are those shaped like small darts, such as the foxtail grass seed.

These seeds have a very sharp point and a long tail, and will penetrate the skin of your dog with ease. The seed will work into their skin causing inflammation and the risk of infection.

The seeds can enter the nose, the eye and eyelids, ears and can burrow their way in between toes, pads, and even the armpit, which can result in severe pain and irritation.

### SYMPTOMS - WHAT TO LOOK FOR

**Nose:** May cause your dog to sneeze; itch at the nose which may be accompanied with a nasal discharge.

**Ear:** You may notice your dog scratching or shaking their head, they may rub the affected ear along the floor. They may hold their head at a tilted angle.

**Eye:** Your dog's eye will become inflamed and red often with discharge or watery eyes.

**Skin:** Your dog may be chewing and licking the affected area. Look for swelling, abscesses, and open draining sores.

**Mouth:** If a grass seed is swallowed, it can become lodged in the throat, this may present as a persistent cough, frequent attempts to vomit, they may have difficulty eating.

## PROTECTING YOUR PET

When you return from a walk you should always perform a thorough check of your pet; pay particular attention to the 'hot zones' which are:

- Between the toes and pads
  - In and around the ears
  - In and round the mouth
    - The "armpits"
    - Groin areas

Once you have checked these areas you should then groom the coat with a comb and/or fine bristled brush.

In long haired breeds it would be beneficial to have the fur in between the toes and pads, the arm-pits and ears trimmed or clipped back as this will enable you to not only see the seeds but also give the seeds less of a chance to cling on.



If you are in ANY doubt, please call us on 03 578 6965

## TREATING BEE AND WASP STINGS IN DOGS

Some cats or dogs will try their best to catch bees and wasps but often get stung in the process.

**Symptoms:** Your pet may show signs of redness, swelling, rubbing/biting the area, and excess salivation.

**Warning:** If your pet has swelling around the neck/face affecting the breathing then seek veterinary advice immediately

### Tips on how to neutralise the pain

- Bee stings are acidic so to neutralise the pain you can apply bicarbonate of soda to the sting. Mix with a little water (three parts soda / one part water) to make a gritty paste
- Wasp stings are alkaline so apple cider vinegar / vinegar can be applied to reduce the pain. Take care not to get any near their eye(s).
- Wrap an ice pack in a tea towel, and if your cat or dog will tolerate it, hold over the swelling area for a period of 5 minutes followed by a five minute break then repeat.



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