



ERIC'S STORY

15 years old, Domestic Shorthair.



In May, Eric was rushed into our Morecambe surgery due to a possible ingestion of paint.

“Eric’s dad was painting the garage floor late at night and when I took him a cup of tea Eric followed me into the garage. Before I could grab hold of him he ran onto the wet floor. I chased after him but by the time I managed to catch him the paint had already dried on his paws.”

Eric’s owners initial reaction was to clean the paws with some soapy water but the paint would not budge.

The next day something was not quite right.

“In the morning I couldn’t find Eric who normally runs into the bedroom as soon as he hears I’m awake. I searched the house and eventually found him hidden under the coffee table in the corner of the front room. I could tell immediately that he wasn’t well.

“He growled at me when I tried to pick him up and his chin was wet where he had been drooling. I phoned the vet right away and took him down to be seen immediately.”

Eric appeared dehydrated and lethargic. His owner brought the empty paint container for Ellie, one of our senior vets, to assess whether the chemicals it contained could potentially be harmful to cats.

The paint was not water based hence why the soap could not remove it the night before.

Eric's tongue had small, blister like, lesions which most likely pointed to Eric trying to chew his feet over night and ulcerating his tongue whilst doing so.

However mouth ulcers can appear due to a number of medical conditions and many poisons can affect major organs.

"Ellie said Eric would have to stay in for 24 hours so they could monitor him and be put on a drip, she would take a blood sample to check if his organs have been affected and give him something to soothe his tongue."

Luckily for Eric, his blood tests came back normal, and any remaining paint was swiftly clipped off and cleaned. Gary, another experienced member of our Veterinary team, re-examined Eric the next morning. He was pleased with Eric's progress; he was bright in himself again and re-hydrated sufficiently.



Eric's shaved and cleaned paws.

"Gary phoned me the next morning and said that Eric was eating and was well enough to come home (...) in hindsight I should have phoned the vets immediately the night before. I can't thank Ellie and Gary and the rest of the team enough for saving him."

My cat has got something ‘chemical’ on its coat, what should I do?

Only when the contamination is mild and confined to the coat, can the cat be treated at home. The aim of treatment is to prevent further contamination.

The cat’s collar should be removed as it may also have been contaminated. Also, some flea collars contain chemicals which may be harmful to sick cats. To remove chemicals from the coat it is best to clip off contaminated hair and then wash the cat in warm soapy water. It is important to remove as much of the contamination as possible before washing because the process of washing can increase the absorption of some chemicals. The cat must then be dried fully to prevent it from chilling. Oily material can be removed by rubbing it with clean, warm cooking oil, then wiping it off thoroughly, (ie, remove oil with oil).

If you feel the cat may have ingested **any** toxin it should be taken to the vet. Even if the contamination is confined to the coat, it is important that the cat should be encouraged to drink as this will help to wash out any absorbed toxins.

After any exposure to possible poisons it is advisable to keep the cat under observation in a warm, quiet room for 24 hours.”

“Decorating materials such as paint, varnish, paint remover, white spirit and wood preservatives (such as creosote). These can be poisonous if groomed from the coat or can cause burning, blisters or irritation to the skin and footpads or severe irritation in the mouth.”

If your pet shows any of the following signs take them to a vet immediately:

- Increased urination
- Increased drinking
- Vomiting
- Depression
- Lethargy (being abnormally sleepy)
- Appearing drunk and uncoordinated
- Seizures (fitting)
- Abnormally fast heartbeat
- Very fast, shallow breathing

The sooner veterinary treatment is received, the better their chances of survival. **If left untreated pets can suffer, and will die.“**

Information obtained from: <http://icatcare.org/advice/cats-and-poisons>