

Recurrent gastritis in an Irish setter

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There is a belief in various parts of the country that chameleons are poisonous to animals. However, there is no indication that this is so. A 5 years old Irish Setter bitch in a good condition, well looked after and under permanent Veterinary supervision was reported of having eaten a chameleon. Approximately 24 hours later the dog became violently sick with the following signs: Repeated vomiting of small amounts of yellowish frothy liquid, fever - 102.5°F, complete anorexia, severe depression, abdominal pain and severe coughing (dry cough). Treatment instituted was as follows: Oxytetracycline (50 mg/ml) at 7 mg per pound body weight for 4 days intravenously, Pyrilamine Maleate (2 mg per pound body weight) IM at 12 hours interval for 4 days.

The dog started drinking after 3 days which coincided with cessation of vomiting. The appetite returned to normal 7 days after the onset of clinical signs. During this period of 7 days the dog's weight decreased by 6 pounds and was slightly dehydrated. The dog then recovered and was apparently in good health.

Approximately 2 months later the dog was again reported sick after eating a chameleon for a second time. The clinical features were as seen previously at the onset of the illness. The treatment that was instituted was as follows: Procaine penicillin 12,000 iu/lb body weight and dihydrostreptomycin 7 mg/lb body weight per day for 5 days IM, Pyrilamine Maleate 3 mg per pound body weight IM at 12 hours interval for 4 days, 4 tablets of Actal 3 times daily for 5 days (each tablet contains 360 mg of sodium polyhydroxyaluminium)

The dog was given ice cubes to lick (*ad libitum*), which she did quite readily. After one day there was small amount of blood in the vomitus on the second and third day. By this time the dog was obviously dehydrated and was given 100 cc dextro saline intravenously and 300 cc subcutaneously. On the 4th day the vomiting ceased and the dog started drinking water. The next day she started eating and the diet was changed as during recovery after the first episode.

Although this is not a formal proof that the chameleon caused the gastritis, I believe that these 2 incidences indicate that chameleon may cause gastric disturbances. It would be useful if similar occurrences are reported if seen by other Veterinarians in the country. Also some experimental work may throw more light on this.

Although it was similar second time acet tablets were given to counteract possible damage that would be caused by acidity, however this did not shorten the period of recovery.