

The Cat Doctor CATERWAULER™

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It's TOO HOT!



25% OFF all cards & gifts

Dog Days at the Cat Doctor!

Hans (our COO, Chief Observing Officer) is tired of looking at the cards and gifts at the Cat Doctor. We have a wonderful selection of cards by Erika Oller, but Hans wants to get some new ones to

observe. In order to change the inventory, we're offering **25% off** all cards and gifts for the next month. Please stop in and see us (and Hans) and pick up some kitty gifts for yourself and others.

What ever happened with the pet food recall?

Written by Shea Miller, a 3rd Year Veterinary Student from Washington State University, who spent some time working with Dr. Young and enjoying New Hampshire.

It's been over 5 months since the history making pet food recall first began. Since that time, the roller coaster ride of fact finding continues. In the beginning of the recall, rumors were flying, and they were sorted through. Pet food was being recalled left and right. Panic-stricken owners turned to their veterinarians, and others made nutritionally inadequate homemade food diets to "protect" their companions. It was a time of confusion and mayhem for all involved.

Now, months later we can look back and see what may have happened. To put things in perspective, only 1-2% of the nation's pet food supply was affected by the contaminant. Unfortunately that 1-2% has resulted in the confirmed deaths of 16 pets and reports of up to 4,000 deaths in the US to date.

The culprit, first thought to be aminopterin (a rat poison), is now believed to be a lethal combination of melamine and cyanuric acid (a breakdown product of melamine). This mixture results in the formation of large crystals which block the kidneys (similar to what happens with antifreeze poisoning). The kidneys can no longer do their job filtering out the waste products in the blood appropriately, and renal failure can occur.

The crystals formed by melamine and cyanuric acid are currently the suspect highest on the list at the FDA, however, they have still not been positively identified as the culprits, and investigations are on going.

Why was melamine (and resulting cyanuric acid) put into pet food? The answer is the fact that melamine is a good source of nitrogen. Protein is made up of amino acid building blocks, which have nitrogen in them. Nitrogen is measured as a quick way to determine protein content of foods. When melamine is added, nitrogen levels are boosted which makes the protein content of the foodstuffs appear higher. Therefore, by using relatively cheap sources of nitrogen such as melamine, money can be saved.

Officials in China had previously denied melamine had been added to pet food ingredients. They later recanted when it was found that several of the manufacturers involved did in fact illegally put these false nitrogen sources into the wheat gluten, which was the tainted ingredient in the bad pet food. Since the recall of wheat gluten, other ingredients such as rice protein concentrate, corn meal, corn gluten, soy protein and rice bran are being tested for these contaminants. Many companies in the U.S. have chosen to use other distributors rather than those from China.

So, as the saga continues, what can you do?

1. Make sure you don't have any recalled pet food.

→ You can check the FDA website www.fda.gov/oc/opacom/hottopics/petfood.html which contains a searchable database of pet food products recalled, and other valuable information.

2. Keep yourself informed.

→ Visit the website <http://www.avma.org/aa/petfoodrecall/default.asp> to get the latest information on the story.

3. Call the Cat Doctor if your cat displays any of the following signs:

→ With any disease early detection is the key to treatment and a better prognosis.

Changes in urination, eating or drinking changes, changes in activity levels, sleeping more or less, losing weight, not grooming or grooming excessively, bad breath or vocalizing more.

Remember the story may not be over, but there is no need to panic! Just be aware of what your kitty is eating, drinking, and how he or she is behaving. If you have any questions, as always feel free to call and ask us.

Editor's Note: Dr. Young has identified two cases (one death and one renal failure) at the Cat Doctor that are probably due to contaminated pet food obtained from grocery stores. Our thoughts and prayers go out to those two families. On a better note, there were only four families that purchased recalled prescription food sold from the Cat Doctor. These clients were notified immediately upon the recall, and all the cats were tested and they are doing fine so far.