

Drain Cleaner Fumes Overcome Ferret

What should be done when a ferret inhales fumes from a drain cleaner?

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Q: Our ferret was in the kitchen, and my husband put a drain cleaner down the sink. Fumes, yuck! Our ferret sneezed after the fumes got worse. We removed him from the cage and took him out of the house, but he looked bad. He was limp and breathing fast. For 15 minutes he snuggled, then breathed a little better. He perked up and seems OK.

We're calling the veterinarian in the morning because we do not know how much fumes got inside him. Any suggestions until the vet visit? We cleaned the cage, dumped the food and got fresh water. He is sleeping now and seems OK. What do you think? How are ferret lungs since they are so small?

A: When the health of your ferret is imperiled due to a toxin, consider doing two things immediately. First, call your veterinarian and speak to someone at that hospital. If your regular veterinarian does not take emergency calls, make sure you have the phone number of the nearest ferret-friendly veterinary emergency hospital. Call and talk to someone. This is the reason to always have emergency phone numbers of hospitals that will see ferrets.

After calling your veterinarian or emergency hospital, call the phone number on the product package. Every potentially toxic product should list a phone number to call. If it does not, then call poison control, either your local number or a national number. Have the package available to read off the ingredients. It may cost you to make this call, but it will be worth it.

In your case, keep your ferret as far away from the fumes as possible and well ventilate the area. Ferret lungs are the same as dog and cat lungs, but because of a ferret's increased metabolic rate, ferrets may be more prone to breathing in more fumes than a dog or cat. Either way, visiting your veterinarian is a good idea for your ferret.

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