Toxicology Tools - Induction of Emesis – should you, or shouldn’t you?

One of the principles of therapy of toxin exposure is decontamination – removal of the toxic agent from the patient.

With suspected ingestion of toxins often the first reaction is to induce vomiting but as the linked articles show below this is not invariably the best course of action.

The induction of emesis is particularly important following the ingestion of certain toxins, especially those with a high risk for morbidity and mortality.

Click [here](#) for further information on these agents

Common agents where early induction of emesis is indicated include:

1. Anticoagulant rodenticides
2. Chocolate
3. Grapes and raisins
4. Over the counter human pain relievers
5. Xylitol

In suspected poisons cases where emesis is induced, please retain a portion of vomit, along with a minimum of 2ml of blood (heparin) and 5ml of plain urine, obtained at the same time, in case toxicological analysis is needed.
In other cases, such as ingestion of some common household items, induction of emesis can cause serious adverse effects and is generally contra-indicated. Click here for further information on these agents.

Examples of toxins where induction of emesis is not recommended:

1. Acidic and alkaline cleaners
2. Batteries
3. Detergents
4. Hydrocarbons
5. Antidepressant medications

Not all these agents can be identified on toxicological analysis. However even part chewed tablet wrappers, capsules and any suspected bait or material found in gardens or parks can be analysed to check for toxic agents.

Please do not hesitate to contact the laboratory Tel 0113 2870175 for advice on toxicological analysis, sample requirements and how to submit samples. Further information can also be found here.

For further advice on the management and treatment of potential toxin cases please contact The Veterinary Poisons Information Service at https://vpisglobal.com/ or by telephone on 02073 055 055.