

## Deadly Combo Culprit in Dog Food Recall

**More evidence suggests the combination of melamine and cyanuric acid was responsible for kidney failure in pets.**

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New studies show what many suspected after the months-long dog food recall that began this past March: When combined, melamine and cyanuric acid can produce deadly effects in pets.

One study found that cats fed food containing only one of those two chemicals experienced no problems whereas cats who ate pet food with both melamine and cyanuric acid “quickly experienced acute kidney failure.”

Led by veterinary toxicologist Birgit Puschner at the California Animal Health and Food Safety Laboratory in the University of California, Davis, School of Veterinary Medicine, the study results also showed that cats receiving the food with both chemicals present “developed fan-shaped crystals in their urinary tracts,” an abnormal development in healthy cats. For more information on the UC Davis study, [click here](#).

An additional study on 22 pigs led by Steve Ensley of Iowa State’s veterinary lab also concluded that a combination of melamine and cyanuric acid causes a more potent result on an animal’s kidney than if consumed individually.

Both studies were presented at the American Association of Veterinary Laboratory Diagnosticians’ annual meeting in Reno, Nev., this October.

The association also released preliminary results from its pet-food nephrotoxicity (damage to the kidneys) survey of veterinary labs, which began April 5 but is ongoing on its website at [www.aavld.org](http://www.aavld.org).

Of the 347 useable cases analyzed and collected through June 6, 2007, 68 percent were cats and 32 percent were dogs. In addition, 61 percent of those cats and 74 percent of those dogs died; the rest were reported ill or recovered. The top two food products responsible for the illnesses as reported by the survey were Iams and Special Kitty for cats and Alpo Prime foods followed by Ol’ Roy for dogs in the U.S.

In descending order, the regions hardest hit with cases of ill pets were Texas, California, Ontario, Illinois, and Michigan.

In Canada, every 20 of 27 cases involved a cat. Special Kitty Canada and President’s Choice were the two foods most frequently associated with illness in Canada during the recall.

The association also used five necropsy cases (4 cats and 1 dog) to conduct a test study. More than one of the contaminants was found in four out of five of the animals and all of them had a history of eating the contaminated food. The most common finding was the presence of yellow-brown crystals within the renal distal tubules and collecting ducts and, occasionally, in the urine sediment. All of the five pets had elevated blood urea and creatinine concentrations, as well as other indicators of renal problems.

For more updates on the dog food recall, [click here](#).