

Protecting your dog from 1080

1080 in the Greater Wellington Region

1080 is one of the most effective tools we have in protecting our native ecosystems and agriculture sector from mammalian predators and associated diseases such as tuberculosis.

Dogs are extremely vulnerable to 1080 poisoning and are 10 times more susceptible to the poison than a possum is.

Prevention of 1080 poisoning is more effective than any treatment. There is no antidote to 1080, however treatment is possible where your dog can be delivered to the nearest veterinary clinic immediately.



Be alert to poisoning

One of the most helpful things you can do to ensure your dog's safety is to stay informed about any operations that are happening, and ensuring you follow the guidelines in place.

All Greater Wellington 1080 operations will be made public on our website www.gw.govt.nz/1080ops.

Warning signs and information boards will be put up in all normal points of entry, before the operation starts, and will remain in place until poison residues are no longer present. We will also issue statements and updates to the media, including local newspapers.

Communications and notifications of the heightened risk that 1080 poses to dogs will be made with all affected parties, including key agencies, user groups, occupiers and neighbours.

All dogs are at risk

1080 is carefully targeted to possums and rats, but dogs are extremely vulnerable to poisoning for both behavioural and biological reasons. Dogs tend to roam and scavenge, which makes the possibility of them ingesting 1080 higher than for other animals.

Most reported dog deaths are not from ingesting 1080 bait, but from poisoned carcasses. This is because:

- 1080 can persist in possum carcasses until they have fully decomposed, which is expected to take three to five months dependant on weather conditions.
- Poisoned possums may have travelled outside of the operational area before dying or possum carcasses may wash downstream out of an operational area.

Prevention is more effective than treatment

As a dog owner it is important to be aware of the risks, and the ways which 1080 poisoning can be prevented.

Staying informed around any 1080 operations in the Greater Wellington region is important for ensuring you know which areas are safe to take your dog.

Despite warning signs and public communications, some dogs have died unnecessarily from 1080 poisoning. We can't be there to ensure dogs are kept safe, so we need your help to reduce accidental ingestion. To do this you should:

- **Keep your dog away from operational areas** – The easiest prevention is to stay informed about 1080 operations, and avoid the area with your dog following the operation.
- **Always supervise your dog or keep it on a leash** – Keep your dog in sight and don't allow them to roam, especially in bushy areas.
- **Use a leash.**
- **Don't allow your dog to scavenge** – Most reported deaths occur after a dog has eaten a poisoned carcass, rather than bait. Keep your dog well fed and well hydrated, and ensure they stay well away from any carcasses until the all clear has been given (three to five months after the operation).
- **Use a muzzle** – A muzzle can stop your dog from eating 1080 baits, or poisoned animal carcasses.



Know the signs of 1080 poisoning – act immediately

It is important to be able to recognise the signs of 1080 poisoning, so that you can react quickly if you suspect that your dog may have ingested bait or a carcass.

Your dog may start displaying signs of poisoning as quickly as half an hour after ingesting the poison, or it may take several hours. Reacting immediately to any of the signs is crucial to your dog's safety.

- **Changes in Behaviour** – Your dog may seem disorientated, restless or hyperactive. Sudden aggression or sensitivity to touch is common, as well as running in circles and barking/howling without reason.
- **Changes in bodily function** – Your dog may start to drool, vomit, defecate or urinate. They may experience tremors, followed by convulsions.

Death can occur within two to 12 hours after ingestion of the poison, but a dog can be saved if immediate action is taken.

Action plan for accidental poisoning

The first defence for 1080 poisoning is always prevention. This is more effective than any treatment that can be given to your dog. If you know there is a possibility that 1080, or poisoned animal carcasses (such as possums, rats and stoats) may be present in an area, it is best not to take your dog. If you do take your dog into one of these areas, you need to be prepared.

- **Know where the closest vet is** – Treatment is possible if you can get your dog to a vet quickly. Call the vet to let them know you are on your way, and advise them that you suspect your dog has 1080 poisoning. Keep in mind, this treatment is not as effective as prevention.
- The only “home remedy” recommended is 3% hydrogen peroxide, which can be purchased at pharmacies. It is given orally to the dog (usually via a syringe) at a dose of 2ml per kg of body weight. The maximum dose that should be given is 45ml for dogs weighing more than 20kgs. Vomiting should occur within 10-15 minutes.
- If you use a home remedy method to make your dog vomit, also take the dog to your vet for further treatment, because vomiting alone will only remove about 50% of the stomach contents so poisoning could still occur.

Advice for you and your dog

All dogs – Dog owners are advised to stay clear of the area until all baits have become nontoxic and possum carcasses have decomposed. Decomposition is expected to take three to five months following the 1080 application.

Working dogs - Landowners who have working dogs should take the following precautions:

- Consider whether your stock can be managed without dogs until all baits have become nontoxic and possum carcasses have decomposed.
- Keep your dogs well fed. Feeding them meat during and after a 1080 operation will make them less likely to scavenge on dead possums.
- Keep your dogs chained or in a kennel when they are not working.
- Consider using a muzzle if suitable. This should be introduced gradually, as this may cause stress to your dog if it isn't used to wearing it. A muzzle may also cause dogs to become overheated during work, particularly in hot weather.

March 2023