



Cameron County
Department of Health and Human Services

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Yvette Salinas, Health Administrator



James W. Castillo II, MD, Health Authority

Interim Guidance:

Date: December 17, 2009


Subject: **Ingestion of Red Tide Toxin (Brevetoxin)**

Policy: Until the United States Public Health Services provides written guidance, the Cameron County Department of Health and Human Services recommends the following guidance for the monitoring and possible collection of specimen from domestic animals (i.e. dogs and cats) suspected of Brevetoxin poisoning:

Monitoring for symptoms: After oral ingestion, brevetoxin poisoning is characterized by a combination of gastrointestinal and neurologic signs and symptoms.

- The incubation period ranges from 15 minutes to 18 hours.
- Gastrointestinal symptoms include abdominal pain, vomiting, and diarrhea.
- Neurologic symptoms include paresthesias (burning or prickly sensation), reversal of hot and cold temperature sensation, vertigo (dizziness), and ataxia (lack of muscle coordination).
- Inhalational exposure to brevetoxin results in cough, dyspnea (breathing disorder), and bronchospasm (bronchial spasm).

Collection of specimen: Liver, muscle (hindquarter and/or forequarter), brain and if possible, stomach contents, preferably 50-100 grams of weight from each animal organ. The brain will not be collected if the animal has been involved in a biting incident where the animal's head needs to be sent to the Texas Department of State Health Services lab in Austin for rabies testing. Temporarily freeze specimens and contact Tony Reisinger, County Extension Agent-Coastal and Marine Resources at cell (956) 493-8129 for pick-up.


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