



SOUTHWEST COLLIE RESCUE

Serving New Mexico, West Texas and Arizona

Spring 2018 newsletter

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A sweet Texas collie is on medical hold at his foster home in AZ after being diagnosed with DM, or dermatomyositis.

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Marijuana can be toxic, even deadly, for dogs

Tiny but tough, Thor ingests marijuana, gets really sick. Next up: heart surgery

By Karen Forgang

Imagine finding your dog shaking his head back and forth as though having a seizure. Terrified, you rush him to emergency care. You're especially worried since he already has a congenital heart problem.

Last month this happened to Betty and Peter Laseau, who are fostering a tiny puppy named Thor for Arizona Sheltie Rescue.

Tests showed that Thor, only eight weeks old and weighing just 10 pounds, had ingested marijuana, which is toxic and potentially life-threatening for dogs.

The Laseaus' home in Phoenix is next to a park, and someone must have tossed something containing marijuana into their back yard, where Thor ate it.

Thor survived his marijuana ordeal, after running up an \$856 vet bill. But he also faces major surgery in late June to fix a restricted pulmonary heart valve. This condition makes him a "sleepy puppy" during the day, says Betty, who also fosters for Southwest Collie Rescue.

"He's very sweet and loving, likes being held, and will curl up and nap with you," she adds. "He's also a fast runner in short spurts. But give him belly rubs and he's ready to sleep!"

The one-time surgery to insert a balloon into his heart valve will help him live a full, happy life.

If you'd like to donate toward Thor's \$3,500 heart surgery, visit our sister group, www.azsheltierescue.com or mail a check to Arizona Sheltie Rescue, 1685 E. Teri Lane, Chino Valley, AZ 86323.



At left, Betty Laseau, one of our most experienced foster parents, holds mighty Thor, "The Dog of Thunder," who survived a severe bout of marijuana poisoning.



More dogs are overdosing on marijuana. What to do? Stash your stash, people!

By Dianne Nelson

Over the past five years, the Pet Poison Helpline has seen a 330% increase in pets who've accidentally ingested marijuana.

This shouldn't come as a surprise. As more states legalize medical and recreational marijuana, more people are using it. Marijuana today also is stronger, containing more THC, its psychoactive ingredient.

It is unclear whether dogs have a lower tolerance than humans for THC, but regardless, the math is unforgiving: A single marijuana-laced cookie potent enough to get a 150-pound human righteously stoned could have 10 times that effect on a 15-pound dog.

Even just taking a walk in the park, a dog could eat the remnants of a joint off the ground and exhibit symptoms.

Cats, by the way, tend not to partake, whereas dogs will try anything once. Maybe even twice: Dogs account for 95% of pet marijuana poisoning cases.

Overdose symptoms can occur

within minutes to hours, depending on how the dog was exposed, its size and the amount ingested.

Symptoms include panting and pacing, loss of balance, hyperactivity, lethargy, trouble breathing, low blood pressure, abnormal heart rhythm, dilated pupils, seizures, urinary incontinence, and being startled by sudden sounds.

If your dog exhibits any of these symptoms, do what Betty did with Thor—get to a vet immediately.

Treatment usually consists of inducing vomiting, if the ingestion was recent enough, and keeping the dog hydrated in a quiet place until the drug clears out of the system.

There's some good news, too: Research finally is being done about the benefits of marijuana, even for dogs. For example, CBD is the part of the marijuana plant with *no* psychoactive properties but a calming effect. Still, getting the dosage right is vital.

The bottom line when it comes to marijuana and dogs: Be *very* careful. Keep your stash out of reach and be vigilant when walking your dog. No matter how you feel about the politics of marijuana, no one wants to see dogs suffer because of human carelessness.