

Our Story

By Stacey O'Brien

We came to Florida looking for a better life. We moved into our home in August with our two angels, Abby and Maggie. It was the day before Thanksgiving when our lives changed forever.

When I heard a splash in the pool, I ran out and found Abby in it; I immediately jumped in and took her out. Maggie ran into the house. Abby was having trouble breathing, so my partner gave her rescue breaths and we rushed her to the ER. Abby went into cardiac arrest in the ER. They revived her and explained our angel, Abby was brain dead. We painfully took her off life support. We wrapped our baby and held her for 40 minutes telling her how much we loved her and how sorry we were.

When we first arrived at the hospital, we had someone go to the house to be with Maggie as we knew she would be distraught that we ran out of the house leaving her behind. When our relative arrived, she saw Maggie on the floor panting. She thought that she was in distress due to the circumstances. She scooped her up, gave her water and just comforted her.

When we arrived at the house we immediately realized Maggie was not well. We raced back to the ER. As we re-entered the ER, the staff's faces were in disbelief. They took one look at her and said "Bufo Toad!" Treatment began with IV fluids and anti-convulsion meds. They explained that they see this about 5-6 times a day, and that she would be ok. We saw Maggie before we left; our youngest angel was in a



Maggie (l) and Abby (r)

crate with IV's in her, weak and listless. We hugged and kissed her.

We met with the veterinarian and started putting the pieces together. Neither Abby nor Maggie had ever fallen in the pool. They raced around that pool every day, many times a day, never once falling in. It was then we realized that Abby had most likely had been affected by the Bufo Toad venom as well.

Prior to going to bed we called the hospital to check on our Maggie. They informed us she was stable. We went to bed at approximately 2:30am expecting her to make a full recovery. The phone rang at 3:04 am. We were informed our youngest angel, Maggie was in cardiac arrest. We raced to the hospital again. When we arrived they were still implementing CPR. We saw that it was futile and asked them to stop. We wrapped our youngest baby, Maggie in a blanket and held her in our arms telling her how much we loved her and how sorry we were. We were devastated and broken.

In Abby and Maggie's memory, we have decided to use their story to let others know about the **poisonous Bufo Toad Venom. IT IS REAL AND IT IS DEADLY!!!** We developed a brochure and want people to know this is a reality living in southern Florida, and it can happen to your family.

Note: Florida is not the only habitat for Bufo Toads - they also thrive in Arizona and possibly other places. A Google search list poison toads in Northeast, Mountain Desert/ Southwest, etc, as well as Florida.

PET SAFETY INFORMATION

THIS IS THE BUFO VENOMOUS TOAD... IT CAN KILL YOUR PET!!



BEHIND THE EYES OF THESE TOADS ARE PAROTOID GLANDS THAT SECRETE A MILKY WHITE POISONOUS TOXIN THAT CAUSES A SEVERE AND SUDDEN REACTION IN DOGS. THESE TOADS CAN BE SMALLER THAN 3" OR AS BIG AS YOUR HAND

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF EXPOSURE TO A TOAD:

1. EXCESSIVE SALIVATION
2. FOAMING AND FROTHING AT THE MOUTH
3. DIFFICULTY BREATHING
4. PAWING AT THE MOUTH
5. VERY RED GUMS
6. STIFF MOVEMENT/LOSS OF COORDINATION
7. SEIZURES
8. DEATH

WHAT TO DO IF YOUR DOG IS EXPOSED TO THE VENOM OF A BUFO TOAD

IMMEDIATE TREATMENT FOR VENOM EXPOSURE:

IMMEDIATELY RINSE MOUTH, BE SURE TO POINT THE DOG'S NOSE TO FLOOR WITH LIGHTLY RUNNING WATER FOR ABOUT 5 MINUTES (THIS WILL PREVENT THE DOG FROM ASPIRATING AND INGESTING VENOM); OR PUT DOG ON ITS SIDE SO THAT WATER RUNS OUT OF THE MOUTH TO REDUCE THE RISK OF ASPIRATION.

1. RUB GUMS, ROOF OF MOUTH AND TONGUE WITH A WET SOAKING RAG TO REMOVE RESIDUE OF VENOM (USE MULTIPLE RAGS/TOWELS AS NEEDED)
2. IMMEDIATELY TAKE YOUR PET TO THE CLOSEST VET / EMERGENCY VET
3. IF YOU HAVE MORE THAN 1 DOG, ASSUME YOUR OTHER DOG(S) MAY HAVE BEEN AFFECTED AND TAKE THEM ALL TO THE VET

HOW TO AVOID EXPOSURE:

1. NEVER LEAVE YOUR DOGS UNATTENDED IN THE EARLY MORNING HOURS OR EVENING WHILE OUTDOORS AND CHECK ON THEM DURING THE DAYTIME HOURS (AS TOADS WILL BE OUT IN THE DAY DURING THE RAINY SEASON)
2. KEEP DOGS ON LEASH DURING WALKS TO KEEP THEM FROM EXPLORING AND FINDING TOADS
3. AT NIGHT CARRY A FLASHLIGHT TO CHECK THE ENVIROMENT WHEN WALKING YOUR DOG

HOW TO KEEP TOADS OUT OF YOUR YARD:

1. REMOVE DEBRIS AND ANY STANDING WATER
2. DO NOT LEAVE WATER BOWLS OR FOOD OUT IN YARD
3. WIRE MESH FENCING 4" - 6" BELOW FENCE LINE AND 12" ABOVE GROUND LINE
4. PEST RID ORGANIC ANIMAL PEST CHASER (GRANULES AND SPRAY)