# How South African Vets Saved Babi the Cat's Life with a Few Shots of Vodka

* **Difficulty: Medium-High**

Babi, a ginger cat, is incredibly lucky that South Africa has not banned the sale of alcohol as the third wave of Covid-19 is intensifying.

A vet in a small town called Fouriesburg, in South Africa, had to rush to a liquor store to buy the purest form of alcohol possible to save Babi's life.

Thanks to a team of vets at the Cluny Animal Trust, a non-profit veterinary organisation, Babi is now a healthy cat. She might have a headache from the alcohol, but other than that she is fine.

Babi was rushed to Cluny Animal Trust vets by her owner, Mme Reitumetsie, and her grandchildren. They love the cat very much and were very worried about him.

The children carried Babi almost 2km to the clinic after noticing him acting strangely. Fortunately, both the clinic’s vets were there when the children arrived with Babi. Babi is a very fussy cat, but they became worried when he was not eating and seemed very weak and feeble. Babi was struggling to stand.

The vets suspected that Babi was poisoned, so one of the vets, Dr Barker, did a procedure to test for poisoning. They found that Babi’s urine was a strange lime/yellow colour. Babi then started to vomit a watery liquid.

The tests showed that Babi had increased glucose levels, which is normally a sign of diabetes. Babi did not have a history of diabetes and he had been eating and acting normally the day before.

Now the vets had to start looking for another cause for Babi’s illness. They decided that it was kidney failure, and because Babi got sick so quickly, it had to be some sort of poison.

They then started thinking that it is winter and gets very cold where Babi lives, with temperatures reaching -5' Celsius most mornings. They decided that it was anti-freeze, a liquid used to help cars to start in the cold, so they checked on the internet for more information.

The information on anti-freeze poisoning showed that Babi must have ingested anti-freeze. The survival rate for this kind of poisoning is not high, unless treated very soon after ingesting it. They were hopeful that Babi would survive as he had vomited earlier.

The information on the internet showed that the urine would be fluorescent. You cannot see if it is unless you have a fluorescent lamp. Dr Baker rushed to her own clinic to collect her fluorescent lamp. Babi’s urine was neon!

Anti-freeze poisoning is treated with intravenous ethanol. They did not have this at the clinic so

they had to go back to the internet to see what could be used instead of ethanol. The vets found that they could use alcohol such as vodka instead of Ethanol. Dr Barker rushed off to the nearest liquor store to buy a bottle of vodka.

Babi was on a drip already, so all the vets had to do was to work out the dosage, dilute the alcohol and administer it. Although the vodka was diluted, Babi got drunk. They had to repeat the doses every six hours for a day and a half and then every eight hours for another day.

The propylene glycol in anti-freeze causes crystals to form in the kidneys which destroys the kidneys. Ethanol, or the vodka in this instance, dissolves the crystals and allows them to pass into the urine. By the fourth treatment, Babi was nearly back to normal. He was eating again and looked and acted quite differently to when the children had first brought him in.

They kept him in the clinic for a couple of days for observation. His family is happy to have Babi back and that he is his normal self again.

