

# Plants, Pesticides and other Posions you may not of thought of

Veterinarians and toxicology experts are urging everyone to remember the four-legged members of the family, as they are among the most vulnerable.

"Twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, and 365 days a year, we receive calls from distressed pet owners across the country," said Ahna Brutlag, DVM, MS, DABT and assistant director at Pet Poison Helpline. "In addition to dealing with the stress of an emergency situation, they are often forced to cope with feelings of regret in light of a mishap that, in most cases, could have been avoided. It takes only a few minutes to educate yourself on how to pet-proof appropriately and avoid the inevitable heartache that so often happens when a beloved pet is accidentally poisoned."

Awareness is the key to preventing poisoning emergencies. Almost 91 percent of calls to Pet Poison Helpline involve dogs – a testament to dogs' curious nature and indifference to eating just about anything. Of these calls, nearly half were for dogs that ingested human medications. It's clearly wise to keep medications out of your pets reach, but there are many other common, household substances toxic to both of our four-legged babies.

Cats are famous for their frisky and inquisitive nature, which often leads them to consume harmful items. Unfortunately, the average household contains many potentially dangerous substances that your feline might encounter – ranging from carpet cleaners to antifreeze to insecticides.

The veterinarians at Pet Poison Helpline perused their records and below are the five most common toxins that have poisoned dogs and cats.

## Human Medications

The container may be child-proof, but your cat may succeed at getting to the pills inside. All drugs should be placed out of reach of felines.

43 percent of calls to Pet Poison Helpline were for dogs that ate over-the-counter (OTC) or prescription medications. The majority of them involved antidepressants such as Prozac, Paxil, Celexa and Effexor, and common OTC drugs containing acetaminophen (e.g. Tylenol®) and NSAIDs (e.g. Advil®, Aleve® and Motrin), which can cause serious harm to dogs when ingested.

## Human Foods

16 percent of calls were for dogs that helped themselves to foods that are safe for humans, but poisonous for dogs. The most prevalent cases were for dogs that ate chocolate. Dark chocolate is the most dangerous since it contains high amounts of theobromine – a relative of caffeine that can be deadly. Xylitol, a sweetener in sugarless gums and candies, is also very dangerous and can be life-threatening even when ingested in small amounts. Raisins and grapes are often overlooked by dog owners as potentially dangerous, but they are extremely toxic and can cause kidney failure. Other human foods toxic to dogs include macadamia nuts, garlic, onions, yeast-based dough and table salt.



## Insecticides

75 percent of calls for dogs were because they ate insecticides in the form of sprays, granules, insect bait stations and more. While many household insecticides are well tolerated by dogs, certain potent types such as organophosphates (often found in rose-care products), can be life-threatening even when ingested in small amounts. Cats are primarily poisoned by contact with concentrated pesticides and fertilizers. This can occur if the product is not stored properly or if too much is used on the lawn.

## Plants

Be advised that the consumption of any plant material may cause vomiting and gastrointestinal upset for dogs and cats. Plants listed as either non-toxic, or potentially toxic with mild GI upset as their symptoms are not expected to be life-threatening to your pets.

Cats are infamous for eating plants, and suffering the consequences. Ingestion of the Easter lily, for instance, can lead to vomiting, diarrhea, and kidney failure. Other plants that are toxic include tulips, oleander, English ivy, azaleas and more.

Dealing with a dog that has been poisoned by a plant can be a scary situation. The Sago Palm, which is very popular in this area of the country, is an extremely poisonous plant to dogs when ingested, causing bloody vomiting and diarrhea, bleeding disorders, liver failure and death. Other plants that are toxic include azaleas, daffodils, tulips, amaryllis and more.

You can find a list of toxic plants on [www.aspc.org/pet-care/animal-poison-control/toxic-and-non-toxic-plants](http://www.aspc.org/pet-care/animal-poison-control/toxic-and-non-toxic-plants).

## Rodenticides

65 percent of calls for dogs were for dogs that got into mouse and rat poisons, which contain various active ingredients that are poisonous to dogs. Depending on the type ingested, poisoning can result in moderate to severe symptoms—anywhere from uncontrolled bleeding, swelling of the brain, kidney failure and seizures. Only one type of mouse poison (anticoagulant or blood thinner) has an antidote to counteract the effects of the poison. The rest, unfortunately, have no antidote and are more difficult to treat. There is also potential for relay toxicity, meaning that pets and wildlife can be poisoned by eating dead rodents that were poisoned by rodenticides.

## Dietary Supplements and Vitamins

55 percent of calls were concerning dogs that ingested dietary supplements and vitamins. While many items in this category such as Vitamins C, K, and E are fairly safe, others such as iron, Vitamin D and alpha-lipoic acid can be highly toxic in overdose situations. Additionally, Pet Poison Helpline has managed several cases involving xylitol poisoning from sugar free multi-vitamins.

If you think your pet may have ingested something harmful, take action immediately. Contact a veterinarian or Pet Poison Helpline at 1-800-213-6680. Pet Poison Helpline is the most cost-effective animal poison control center in North America charging only \$39 per call; this includes unlimited follow-up consultations.

Sources: Pet Poison Hotline and ASPCA