

ASPCA Poison List
Animal Medical Centre – Home Care Notes
General Information

Are there certain potentially harmful substances that pets get into more than others?

In 2007, the ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center managed more than 130,000 cases. The top calls of 2007 involved the following common household goods and products:

Prescription and over-the-counter drugs, both of the human and pet variety, including painkillers, cold and flu preparations and antidepressants. The ASPCA cautions pet owners to never give their four-legged family members any type of medication without first talking with a veterinarian. All drugs should be kept out of reach, preferably in closed cabinets above countertops.

Insecticides and insect control products such as flea and tick preparations and insect baits. Some species of animals can be particularly sensitive to certain types of insecticides, so it is vital that you follow label instructions exactly and never use any product not specifically formulated for your pet. Common household plants such as lilies, azaleas and kalanchoe. Rhododendron, sago palm and schefflera can also be harmful to pets.

Chemical bait products designed for mice, rats and other rodents. When using any rodenticide, place the product in areas that are completely inaccessible to companion animals.

Common household cleaners such as bleaches, detergents and disinfectants. Gastrointestinal distress and irritation to the skin, eyes or respiratory tract may be possible if a curious animal has an inappropriate encounter with such products.

I'm a veterinarian; where can I learn more?

Please also visit [Veterinary Education Online](#), a web-based continuing education program specifically developed for busy veterinarians looking to enhance their knowledge and increase their clinical skills.

What should I include in my pet's first-aid kit?

Accidents happen, so it's smart to be prepared in case of an emergency. ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center experts recommend that you invest in an emergency first-aid kit for your pet.

The kit should contain:

- Fresh bottle of hydrogen peroxide, 3 percent USP (to induce vomiting)
- Turkey baster, bulb syringe or large medicine syringe (to administer peroxide)
- Saline eye solution
- Artificial tear gel (to lubricate eyes after flushing)
- Mild grease-cutting dishwashing liquid (for bathing an animal after skin contamination)
- Forceps (to remove stingers)
- Muzzle (to protect against fear- or excitement-induced biting)
- Can of your pet's favorite wet food
- Pet carrier

Always consult a veterinarian or the APCC for directions on how and when to use any emergency first-aid item. We also suggest that you keep the telephone number of the ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center: (888) 426 4435 as well as that of your local veterinarian in a prominent location.

Flowers/Plants

Are there any plants that are toxic to my pets that I shouldn't keep around the house?

The following is a list of the 17 most common poisonous plants. For details on each plant, follow [this link](#).

- Lilies
- Marijuana
- Sago Palm
- Tulip/Narcissus bulbs
- Azalea/Rhododendron
- Oleander
- Castor Bean
- Cyclamen
- Kalanchoe
- Yew
- Amaryllis
- Autumn Crocus
- Chrysanthemum
- English Ivy
- Peace Lily (AKA Mauna Loa Peace Lily)
- Pothos
- Schefflera

[Click here](#) for a full list of toxic plants.

How do I find out if a plant is toxic to pets?

Being familiar with the plants in and around your home is key in preventing your pet from consuming any plants that may be poisonous. A great resource for learning about which plants are toxic and which ones are not is located right on www.asPCA.org/apcc. Please note, if you think your pet has been exposed to a potentially toxic plant, call your veterinarian or the ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center hotline at 888-426-4435.

What houseplants are safe?

Please visit our [toxic and nontoxic plant pages](#) for information on which plants are safe and which ones to avoid. If you're looking for safe flower arrangements, check out the beautiful and pet-friendly selections at [Teleflora's Flower Club](#).

I want to send my pet-owning friend a floral arrangement. What flowers are safe to send?

Thanks for thinking of the animals! Sending a bouquet is a wonderful idea, but it's wise to consider that [certain flowers are downright dangerous](#) to our animal companions. Many varieties of lilies are highly poisonous to cats, for example, and while rose flowers may be fine, their thorns could prove injurious. In order to ensure that you send flowers that won't harm pets, we've worked with our experts at the ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center to offer you some suggestions for [pet-friendly selections from Teleflora's Flower Club](#). These include dendrobium orchids, violets and gerbera daisies, among others.

Your flower purchases can help support our mission. ASPCA will receive 20% of the purchase price.

P.S. Please note that while the flowers shown are considered to be nontoxic, it's important to keep in mind that even "safe" plants can produce minor stomach upset if ingested.

Food/Drugs

What are the most common food hazards I should be aware of?

Experts at the ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center urge you to avoid feeding the following foods to your pet:

- Alcoholic beverages
- Avocado
- Chocolate (all forms)
- Coffee (all forms)
- Fatty foods
- Macadamia nuts
- Moldy or spoiled foods
- Onions, onion powder
- Raisins and grapes
- Salt
- Yeast dough
- Garlic
- Products sweetened with xylitol

For information on additional foods that may be potentially hazardous, please visit our [People Food](#) archives.

Is milk bad for cats?

Unless they are spoiled or moldy, milk, cheese and other dairy foods are not considered to be poisonous to pets. However, cats do not possess significant amounts of lactase, the enzyme that breaks down lactose in milk. Feeding milk and milk-based products to cats can actually cause them to vomit or have diarrhea, which in severe cases could lead to inflammation of the pancreas. For this reason, it's always a good idea to check with your veterinarian before offering any "people food" to your pets.

Why is chocolate bad for dogs?

Chocolate can contain high amounts of fat and caffeine-like stimulants known as methylxanthines. If ingested in significant amounts, chocolate can potentially produce clinical effects in dogs ranging from vomiting and diarrhea to panting, excessive thirst and urination, hyperactivity, abnormal heart rhythm, tremors, seizures and even death in severe cases.

Typically, the darker the chocolate, the higher the potential for clinical problems from methylxanthine poisoning. White chocolate has the lowest methylxanthine content, while baking chocolate contains the highest. As little as 20 ounces of milk chocolate—or only two ounces of baking chocolate—can cause serious problems in a 10-pound dog. While white chocolate may not have the same potential as darker forms to cause a methylxanthine poisoning, the high fat content of lighter chocolates could still lead to vomiting and diarrhea, as well as the possible development of life-threatening pancreatitis, an inflammatory condition of the pancreas.

How can I check to see if my pet food has been recalled?

The Food and Drug Administration website is an excellent resource: <http://www.fda.gov>

Can I feed my dog a human breath mint?

It's not a good idea to feed your dog any sort of breath freshener that hasn't been formulated specifically for pets. Some breath-freshening products contain the sweetener xylitol, which has the potential to cause a sharp drop in a dog's blood sugar. This can result in depression, loss of coordination and seizures, and in some cases, liver damage. We also don't advise giving your dog breath freshening strips. Certain breath strips contain menthol, which can be irritating to the tissues of the mouth and the gastrointestinal tract. There are plenty of ways to solve your dog's breath problem without giving him products made for people. We recommend you discuss an appropriate oral hygiene program with your veterinarian.

Can I give my pet Ibuprofen?

In a word, *NO!* Ibuprofen can definitely be toxic to dogs and other pets—even in small amounts. Depending on the dose ingested, significant gastrointestinal damage or even kidney damage could result.

In fact, many drugs that are beneficial to humans can be harmful or even deadly for pets. We strongly urge you to never give your pet any medication without first speaking with his or her regular veterinarian.

Can I give my pet aspirin?

We strongly advise owners to never give their pets any medication without first consulting with their regular veterinarian. Many drugs, including non-steroidal anti-inflammatories like aspirin, can cause serious or potentially life-threatening problems, depending on the dose involved.

If you feel that your pet needs pain relief for any reason, we highly recommend that you get in touch with your veterinarian—if you have not already. Your vet can direct you regarding the best dose to use or, if necessary, can prescribe a different pain reliever.

Can my pets actually chew through containers of aspirin?

Unfortunately, yes. While most human medications are contained in child-proof bottles, these containers are not pet-proof. Pets can easily chew and break open packaging, so medications should always be stored in a secure cabinet above the countertop.

Around the House

What are the most common household items I should watch out for?

Medication and products containing harsh chemicals top the list, but a few other common household hazards, like mothballs and fabric softener sheets, might surprise you. Please visit our page on maintaining [A Poison Safe Home](#) to see a list of a list of common household items, plants and foods that pet parents will want to keep curious whiskers and paws away from.

What cleaning supplies can I use that won't hurt my pets?

The key to using household cleaners in a way that is safe to your pet is to read and follow label directions for proper use and storage. If the label states, "Keep pets and children away from area until dry," those directions should be strictly adhered to in order to avoid potential problems. Many household cleaners can be used safely when the directions on the label are followed exactly. Products that contain bleach can be very effective in safely disinfecting certain household surfaces when used appropriately, but if your pet is exposed to them, they can cause an upset stomach, drooling, vomiting or diarrhea. There is even a danger of severe oral burns if ingested in a high-enough concentration. Please be aware that some detergents can produce similar signs in pets, and cats can be particularly sensitive to certain ingredients, such as phenols.

Are any types of cat litter poisonous to cats?

Most kitty litter products are made out of organic materials such as bentonite clay or silica. These substances are considered to be chemically and biologically inert, and do not pose a toxic concern for pets. Cats may ingest small amounts of litter when grooming themselves after using the litter box, and these amounts pass through the digestive tract easily without problems. However, if an animal ingests a very large amount of litter (as can happen when a dog "cleans out" the litter box), gastrointestinal upset, constipation, or in rare cases, intestinal obstruction could potentially occur.

Is it safe for my pet to drink from the toilet?

Bacterial-related gastrointestinal problems could occur from drinking stagnant toilet water, so it is a good idea to discourage your dog from imbibing from the commode.

Special note for those who use drop-in toilet bowl cleaning tablets: If you follow label directions, most toilet bowl cleaning tablets would not be expected to cause problems beyond minor stomach upset, should a dog take a drink out of the diluted water in the toilet bowl.

Seasonal

What are the some dangers pets face during Valentine's Day?

Here are a few top tips to ensure a safe February 14 for your furry loves:

- Potentially poisonous flowers include lilies, tulips, amaryllis, daisies, chrysanthemums and baby's breath
- Don't leave the room while candles are still burning. Many pets, particularly kittens, are attracted to the flames and could get burned or singed.
- Take extra care if you'll be serving wine—if ingested, this could cause a range of symptoms, from vomiting and diarrhea to metabolic disturbances and even coma.
- [Click here](#) for the complete ASPCA Guide to a Pet-Friendly Valentine's Day.

What are the dangerous substances pets should avoid during the Christmas holidays?

Holiday hazards include:

- Christmas tree water, which may contain fertilizers and bacteria that can upset the stomach if ingested
- Electrical cords
- Ribbons or tinsel, which can become lodged in the intestines and cause intestinal obstruction—this most often occurs with kittens
- Batteries
- Glass ornaments.
- Of course, there are usually a lot of delicious goodies floating around during the holidays, too—be sure to keep human treats inaccessible to your pets.

What are some dangers pets face during the cold winter weather?

The cold weather can bring about some surprising chemical dangers involving ice-melting products and antifreeze.

After your dog's been outside in the sleet, snow or ice, thoroughly wipe off his legs and stomach. If he licks his paws, he could ingest salt, antifreeze or other potentially dangerous chemicals. His paw pads may also bleed from snow or encrusted ice.

Antifreeze, while essential to a car's cooling system, is very dangerous to your pets if they are exposed to it. Be sure to thoroughly clean up any spills from your vehicle, and consider using products that contain propylene glycol rather than ethylene glycol.

For more helpful information, please check our Top Ten Cold Weather Tips.

What are some hazards pets face during the warm weather?

Sunbathing, pool parties, barbecues and fleas? ASPCA experts offer the following tips to keep your pets safe when the mercury rises:

- Keep citronella candles, insect coils and oil products out of reach. If ingested, they can produce stomach irritation in pets, and possibly even central nervous system depression.
- Do not apply sunscreen or insect repellent product to your pet that is not labeled specifically for use on animals. The ingestion of sunscreen products can result in drooling, vomiting, diarrhea, excessive thirst and lethargy in pets.
- Always keep matches and lighter fluid out of your pets' reach. Certain types of matches contain chlorates, which if swallowed could result in difficulty breathing, or kidney disease in severe cases.
- Never leave alcoholic drinks unattended where pets can reach them. Alcoholic beverages can be poisonous to pets and if ingested, the animal could become extremely weak, severely depressed or could go into a coma.
- Cats react very differently than dogs to some insecticides; because of this, some flea-control products that are safely used on dogs, particularly those containing permethrin, can be deadly to cats, even in small amounts.

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