



## Poison Prevention for Pet owners

Poisons or toxins can often be misunderstood. Pet owners can unknowingly put their pets at risk for poisoning, such as overdosing a prescribed medication or ingestion of a household cleaning product or plant.

Hopefully this handout will familiarize you with common items in your home that can make your pet very ill. This will cover what to “keep out of reach” of our four-legged, companions, and what to do if it happens.

Start with a plan – learn about the potential toxins you have, identify them, and learn about what you could do if your pet ingested them, and develop a plan if it does happen.

### What should I do when I know my pet has been exposed to a toxin?

1. Read the label. Take note of the name of the product or item and active ingredients, if possible.
2. Estimate, if possible, how much is missing (a teaspoon, a tablespoon, a cup, or the whole container).
3. Call us during business hours or the Care Center or MedVet with as much information as possible about the product. If it is convenient, bring the product or package with you.
4. Call **ASPCA Poison Control at 1-888-426-4435**. There is a fee associated with calling. However, you can have immediate information on the severity of the toxin and the steps to take to resolve it.
5. If your pet has vomited, and it is possible to do so, bring a sample with you.
6. With some toxins, vomiting is not recommended. Please call a veterinarian first to determine if this will be recommended.

### What should I do if my pet comes in contact with a chemical or toxin on their skin?

1. Try to determine whether any product was ingested.
2. Wash your pet thoroughly, paying extra attention to the area of contact. Wear gloves to avoid irritation to your skin. Flush their eyes and wash their head with tap water if necessary.
3. Remember if your pet has something foreign on their haircoat they will groom themselves. This can cause a pet to also have ingested a toxin.

### What are some signs of toxin ingestion?

Signs include, but are not limited to:

- Just not acting right
- Vomiting
- Severe depression, or weakness
- An allergic-type reaction (swelling, redness, itching)
- Difficulty breathing or rapid breathing
- Bleeding for no known cause
- Diarrhea
- Excessive drooling
- Anxiety
- Highly reactive to being touched
- Dilated (big) or constricted (small) pupils
- Abnormal urination (not making urine, bloody urine or frequent trips)

- Seizures or similar neurologic activity (tremors, shaking, head tilting, stumbling, inability to rise or walk, stiffness, etc.)

Not every toxin will have the same signs, so never hesitate to call us!

### **How would I know if I need to induce vomiting?**

- If you feel your pet has come in contact with a chemical or toxin, you should contact us during business hours for the best course of action.
- If after business hours, please contact your closest emergency hospital Care Center or MedVet. Or you can contact ASPCA Poison Control.

### **How do I keep my pet from toxin exposure?**

- Keep all human and pet medications out of reach. In addition to prescription medications, this includes over the counter medications (decongestants, cough syrup, Tylenol), and herbal remedies (ginseng, diet, and muscle building supplements).
- Keep cleaning solutions, chemicals, oils, antifreeze, fuels, paints, aerosols in closed or locked cabinets.
- Keep lawn treatment products locked away as well. If the lawn has been treated with a liquid fertilizer or insecticide, make sure it dries before allowing your pet outside. If you use dry chemical treatments, be mindful of pets that dig and eat grass. These products can cause external and internal problems. Always read and follow product instructions.

### **The following is a list of common toxic agents found in most houses:**

- Zinc (pennies minted after 1983)
- Grapes, Raisins
- Onions
- Rodenticides (rodent poison): There are many types of rodent poisons. Your veterinarian will need to know, if possible, what type it is. Different products can cause damage to different body systems, so bringing the product label with you will be helpful.
- Insecticides and Molluscicides (bug and snail killer): similarly, bring the product label if possible.
- Herbicides (weed and plant killers)
- Moldy food, garbage, or animal carcasses.
- Lead (found in old toys, drapery weights, paints prior to 1977, some putty and roofing material, solder, car batteries, wheel weight, lead shot, fishing sinkers)
- Antifreeze (ethylene glycol): Signs associated with this can be seen soon after ingestion, resolve and then resume in 12-24 hours. Most antifreeze tastes very sweet and animals find it desirable. If you even suspect ingestion, take your pet to the veterinarian immediately. If untreated animals will develop irreversible and fatal kidney damage
- Disinfectants, glues, detergents, soaps, corrosives (acids), caustics (bases), fertilizers, paints, varnish, paint thinner
- Acetaminophen: This includes Tylenol, Anacin, Excedrin and Datril. One Tylenol can be fatal to a cat. Never give your pets human drugs without first being advised by a veterinarian.
- Aspirin and Ibuprofen
- Caffeine products (methylxanthines) including chocolate. Dark chocolate and Baker's chocolate are more dangerous than milk chocolate.
- Xylitol is an ingredient found in sugarless gums and food.
- Plants: If your cat or dog is a plant eater or chewer, familiarize yourself with the plants you have and ask your veterinarian if they may be a problem.
- Nicotine
- Alcohol
- Illicit drugs (marijuana, amphetamines)