

Help protect your pets every day with the following tips from our experts at the ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center

Did you know that many substances commonly found in and around your home can be potentially dangerous to your animal companions?

1. Certain foods can be toxic to pets if eaten in significant quantities. Try to commit this list to memory:

- Alcoholic beverages
- Avocado
- Chocolate
- Coffee
- Fatty foods
- Macadamia nuts
- Moldy or spoiled foods
- Onions
- Raisins and grapes
- Salt
- Yeast dough

2. Ibuprofen may help relieve your headache, but painkillers and other common medications can be deadly to your animal companions. Please keep all prescription and over-the-counter drugs—that includes cold medicines, diet pills, antidepressants, anti-cancer drugs and vitamins—in closed cabinets out of your pets' reach. Never give your pet medication unless directed to do so by a veterinarian.

3. Got fleas? Always read the label first before using any flea-control product on or around your pet. When products like these are misused, problems may result, ranging from vomiting to diarrhea to more serious effects such as difficulty breathing, muscle tremors and seizures.

4. Never use a flea-control formula on your cat that's meant for dogs only, or vice versa. For example, there are more than 18 brands of flea-control products for canines that contain permethrin—just a few drops of which can be potentially life-threatening to felines.

5. They may be pretty, but many common houseplants can be poisonous to your pets. If you're not sure about a particular species, ask your veterinarian or visit the APCC online at www.apcc.aspc.org to find out if it is safe or not. And note that many members of the lily family (*Lilium* and *Emerocallis* species)—these popular springtime plants include the Easter lily, tiger lily, rubrum lily, Japanese show lily and some day lilies—can cause kidney failure in cats if ingested.

6. While essential to a car's cooling system, antifreeze can be fatal to dogs and cats—even in very small amounts. Make sure to clean up any spills from your vehicle immediately, and consider switching to a propylene glycol-based antifreeze, which is significantly less toxic than conventional ethylene glycol antifreeze.

7. Did you just apply weed killer or insecticide to your lawn or fertilize the plants in the garden? Please always follow label directions for proper application of these products, and do not allow pets access to these areas until the amount of time listed on the label by the manufacturer has passed and the product has dried thoroughly. Your pet could become exposed to these substances by licking her paws after walking through treated areas when wet or before access should be allowed according to label directions.

8. Always store lawn and garden products in areas that are inaccessible to animals, such as a locked shed or garage. This goes for paint, oil, gasoline and other potentially dangerous chemicals, too.

9. How does your garden grow? Many plants and trees can be harmful to pets if ingested, so it's a good idea to find

out if a species is safe before you plant it. For example:

- Cardiotoxic plants—those that can affect the heart—include lily of the valley, oleander, rhododendron, azalea, yew and foxglove.
- Rhubarb leaves and certain species of lily can cause kidney failure.
- Cycads and some species of mushrooms can result in liver failure.

10. To protect your pets from getting into something they shouldn't, secure all your garbage cans with tamper-proof lids. For extra protection, you may want to keep them safely out of reach in a cupboard or shed. For more information on how to poison-proof your home, visit the "Make Your Pet's Home Poison Safe" interactive house at www.apcc.aspc.org.

If you suspect that your pet has ingested a potentially poisonous substance, immediately call your veterinarian or the ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center at (888) 426-4435. In most instances, early detection and prompt treatment may help reduce the risk of developing clinical signs or increase the chances of a successful recovery if signs are present. It will help to note what you think your pet has eaten, when he ingested the substance in question and any problems he is experiencing.



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