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Toxic Plants and Substances

Despite our best efforts, our pets may get into something that is harmful for them. Below are examples of some of the most common toxic substances your pet may find. If you feel your pet has ingested a toxic substance please call the ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center* at 888-426-4435. For a complete list of potentially dangerous plants, foods, and products please visit the ASPCA Animal Control website at www.aspc.org/pet-care/animal-poison-control



Cannabis – Ingestion of Cannabis by a pet can result in depression of the central nervous system and incoordination, as well as vomiting, diarrhea, drooling, increased heart rate, and even seizures and coma.

Sago Palm – All parts of *Cycas Revoluta* are poisonous but the seeds or “nuts” contain the largest amount of toxin. The ingestion of just one or two seeds can result in very serious effects which include vomiting, diarrhea, depression, seizures and liver failure.

Lilies – Members of the *Lilium* species are considered to be highly toxic to cats. Ingestion of very small amounts of the plant can cause severe kidney damage.

Tulip – The bulb portions of *Tulipa/Narcissus* species contain toxins that can cause intense gastrointestinal irritation, drooling, loss of appetite, depression of the central nervous system, convulsions, and cardiac abnormalities.

Azalea & Rhododendron – Members of the *Rhododendron* species contain substances known as grayantoxins which can produce vomiting, drooling, diarrhea, weakness and depression of the central nervous system in animals. Severe azalea poisoning could ultimately lead to coma and death from cardiovascular collapse.

Oleander – All parts of *Nerium oleander* are considered to be toxic as they contain cardiac glycosides that have the potential to cause serious effects including gastrointestinal tract irritation, abnormal heart function, hypothermia, and even death.

Cyclamen – *Cyclamen* species contain the highest concentration of the toxic component cyclamine is typically located in the root portion of the plant. If consumed, *Cyclamen* can produce significant gastrointestinal irritation, including intense vomiting. Fatalities have also been reported in some cases.

Alcohol – Alcohol can cause vomiting, diarrhea, decreased coordination, central nervous system depression, difficulty breathing, tremors, abnormal blood acidity, coma and even death.

Chocolate, Coffee and Caffeine – These products all contain substances called methylxanthines which are found in cacao seeds. When ingested by pets, methylxanthines can cause vomiting, diarrhea, panting, excessive thirst, urination, hyperactivity, abnormal heart rhythm, tremors, seizures and even death.

Onions, Garlic, and Chives – These vegetables and herbs can cause gastrointestinal irritation and could lead to red blood cell damage. Although cats are more susceptible, dogs are also at risk if a large enough amount is consumed.

Grapes and Raisins – These fruits can cause kidney failure.

Yeast Dough – Yeast dough can rise and cause gas to accumulate in your pet's digestive system. This can be painful and can cause the stomach to bloat, and potentially twist becoming a life threatening emergency. The yeast produce ethanol as a by-product and a dog ingesting raw bread dough can become drunk (See alcohol).

Xylitol – Xylitol is used as a sweetener in many products including gum, candy, baked goods and toothpaste. It can cause insulin release in most species which can lead to liver failure. The increase in insulin leads to hypoglycemia (lowered sugar levels). Initial signs of toxicosis include vomiting, lethargy, and loss of coordination. Signs can progress to seizures, elevated liver enzymes, and liver failure can be seen within a few days.

Nuts – Almonds, pecans, and walnuts contain high amounts of oils and fats. The fats can cause vomiting, diarrhea, and potentially pancreatitis in pets.

NEVER give any human medications to your pet without consulting with your veterinarian

Pain killers – Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) include over-the-counter medications like ibuprofen and naproxen. These are metabolized and eliminated differently by our pets than by humans. Because of the difference in elimination, even small amounts can cause significant medical problems in dogs including gastrointestinal ulcers and kidney failure. There are medical conditions where aspirin is a recommended treatment; however, overdosing can result in medical conditions ranging from gastrointestinal upset to liver failure.

Adderall – Adderall, as well as many ADD drugs, contain amphetamines which stimulate the central nervous and cardiovascular systems. Amphetamines can be very harmful or even deadly to pets if enough are ingested potentially causing hyperactivity, tremors, seizures, fever, abnormal heart rate and rhythm, coma and even death.

Others of Mention – Irises, daffodil, avocado, citrus, antidepressants, antifreeze, pest bait, fertilizers and lawn products.



For a complete list of potentially dangerous plants, foods, and products please visit the ASPCA Animal Control website at www.aspca.org/pet-care/animal-poison-control

Important Phone Numbers

- Caring Hands Animal Hospital in Merrifield at 703-942-8800
- ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center* at 888-426-4435
- Local emergency 24 hour veterinary service such as:
 - VCA SouthPaws in Fairfax at 703-752-9100
 - The Hope Center in Vienna at 703-281-5121
 - The Regional Veterinary Referral Center in Springfield at 703-451-8900

**Animal Poison Control will charge a one time fee for a phone consultation for both clients and hospitals.*