

HOUSEHOLD ITEMS TOXIC TO PETS

In 2013, the ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center responded to 180,000 calls about pets exposed to potentially poisonous substances. Of these calls, 15 percent were due to insecticide exposure, 10 percent to household products, 5.5 percent to rodenticides, and more than 2 percent to lawn and garden products. More than 90 percent of pet poisonings occur in our homes, so it's important to become familiar with these common household items.



Acids

Acids will cause immediate pain on contact and can cause severe tissue damage. Pets are most commonly exposed by contact of the skin or accidental ingestion. Severe injury can be seen when the eyes, skin, gastrointestinal tract, and respiratory system are exposed.

Examples of acids include batteries, battery fluid, toilet bowl cleaner, vinegar, hair wave neutralizers, and drain cleaners.

Alkalis

Unlike acids, alkalis do not have a strong flavor. This makes them more dangerous because large amounts are more likely to be ingested. Tissue damage from alkalis can range from mild tissue irritation to severe corrosive injury, depending on the concentration of the product.

Examples of alkalis include bleach, dishwashing detergent, hair relaxers, oven cleaners, and lye.

Carbamates/Organophosphates

Carbamates and organophosphates are insecticides that are commonly used on yards, flowering plants, gardens, and even pets. 7.5 percent of the calls that came into the ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center in 2013 were related to cats that had been exposed to these insecticides. Be sure to always read the label before applying any insecticide to your pet, home, or yard. Never apply lawn or garden insecticides on your pets, and never apply products meant for dogs on cats.

Examples of carbamates/organophosphates include diazinon, chlorpyrifos, fampfthur, coumaphos, cyothioate, malathion, terbufos, and fention.

Firestarter Logs

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Firestarter logs are composed of compressed saw dust and wax. Certain brands of these logs contain heavy metals, which are toxic to pets. Ingestion of this household item can also cause intestinal obstruction.

Glow Sticks Or Jewelry

Glow jewelry is made of a bitter, oily liquid that contains dibutyl phthalate (often called DBP). This chemical itself isn't very toxic, but the bitterness causes profuse drooling, gagging, and retching. Ingesting the jewelry itself could also lead to a foreign body obstruction in the pet's airway or digestive tract.

Glue

Ingestion of glues can cause irritation of the intestinal tract. Gorilla glue is especially dangerous because it contains diisocyanate, which will rapidly expand into a large firm foam mass when exposed to stomach acid. Exposure to gorilla glue usually requires surgery to remove the foreign body.

Examples of toxic glues include wood glue, construction glue, Gorilla glue, and super glue.

Liquid Potpourri

Liquid potpourri, which is used in simmering pots, is extremely toxic to cats. Just a few licks can cause severe chemical burns inside a cat's mouth and can even cause organ damage.

Mothballs

The chemicals in mothballs can be toxic, especially to cats, if inhaled or ingested. Mothballs slowly release a gas vapor that kills and repels moths and other insects. There are several insecticides used in mothballs, but naphthalene is the most toxic. Many manufacturers have discontinued the use of naphthalene due to its flammability and toxicity.

Tea Tree Oil

Tea tree oil is often used for its antifungal and antibacterial properties. It can be found in many products at varying concentrations. Products containing 1 to 2 percent of tea tree oil are considered nontoxic if used as directed. As little as 7 drops of 100 percent tea tree oil can cause severe poisoning, though, and 2 to 4 teaspoons can cause death in dogs and cats if ingested.

Methanol

Pets with methanol poisoning show similar signs to alcohol poisoning. In severe cases, low blood pressure, respiratory failure, and seizures can occur.

Examples of products containing methanol include windshield washer fluid, model airplane fluid, paint removers, varnishes, and many solvents.

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Theobromine

Theobromine is the ingredient in chocolate that is toxic to dogs. Baking chocolate contains the highest concentration of theobromine. Signs of ingestion include increased heart rate, vomiting, diarrhea, muscle tremors or seizures, and death.

Ethylene Glycol / Antifreeze

Antifreeze, an automotive coolant, contains ethylene glycol, which can be problematic if ingested by a pet. Some early signs of ingestion are “acting drunk,” excessive salivation, vomiting, excessive urination, and dehydration. If left untreated, ethylene glycol poisoning can lead to severe acute kidney failure along with secondary development of calcium oxalate crystals in the kidneys.

Mouse And Rat Poisons

There are four common active ingredients in mouse and rat poisons: long-acting anticoagulants, cholecalciferol, bromethalin, and phosphide rodenticides. Each has a completely different mechanism of poisoning an animal and not all are treatable with Vitamin K1. Even if your cat does not directly eat the mouse or rat poison, she can be affected by eating the mouse or rat who originally ate the poison.

If you think your pet has been poisoned, it's important to contact us, the closest Animal Emergency Center or call a pet poison helpline immediately. The *ASPCA Poison Control Center (888-426-4435)* and the *Pet Poison Helpline (800-213-6680)* are available 24/7, year round (consultation fees may apply). Save these potentially life-saving phone numbers in your contacts so you're ready in case of an emergency. Always have the following information available when you call about your pet's potential poisoning:

Species, breed, age, sex, weight

Symptoms/signs of your pet's poisoning

Name, strength, and amount ingested (have the product container or packaging available for reference)

The time elapsed since the time of the exposure