

Protect Pets From Poisoning

Dogs and cats may ingest ordinary household products that are commonly stored in the house or garage. Some products are potentially toxic and should be stored safely away from pets. Some plants found in the house or yard can also be toxic if consumed. If a pet ingests a potentially poisonous chemical compound or plant, the toxic signs may be immediate or may be delayed hours or even days before they are noticed.

When a poisoning is suspected, it is important to stay calm and not panic. When dealing with a suspected poisoning the best possible situation is to know the identity of the poison to which the pet was exposed, the amount ingested (or exposed by other means), the time the exposure occurred and when signs of poisoning started. If available, collect the poison container and try to make an estimate of the amount of poison exposure. Obtain the telephone number of anyone who may have inadvertently poisoned the pet, such as an exterminator, as they may be able to provide valuable information about the substance to which the pet was exposed.

If it is not possible to identify a specific poison, your veterinarian will only be able to treat the pet on the basis of the presenting signs. In some cases the signs of poisoning are distinct enough to allow identification of the poison. In situations in which it is likely that a poisoning has occurred but the identity of the poison is unclear, it is possible in many cases to successfully treat an animal symptomatically.

Activated charcoal, the universal antidote, is one of the most effective agents in the treatment of many animal poisonings. It is administered orally and functions by adsorbing toxic compounds thereby preventing adsorption of a potential toxicant. The inclusion of sorbitol, a mild cathartic, in the treatment regime may decrease the time required to eliminate the activated charcoal and its adsorbed toxicant from the gastrointestinal tract.

Potential Household Poisons

- Ant and roach baits
- Antifreeze containing ethylene glycol
- Bleach
- Fertilizer, including plant foods
- Human drugs, such as acetaminophen, ibuprofen, cold medications containing pseudoephedrine
- Hydrocarbons (paint, polishes and fuel oils)
- Rodenticides

Foods to Avoid Feeding a 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
- Xylitol sweetened products

Most Common Poisonous Plants

- Azalea/Rhododendron
- Castor Bean
- Cyclamen
- Kalanchoe
- Lilies
- Marijuana
- Oleander
- Sago Palm
- Tulip/Narcissus bulbs
- Yew

Keys to Successful Treatment

- Do not panic, stay calm and gather as much information as possible concerning the incident
- Determine to what poison the pet was exposed
- Determine the amount of the poison the pet ingested (or was exposed to by other means)
- Try to determine the time the exposure occurred
- Note the time when signs of poisoning started
- Collect the poison container and packaging for reference
- Consult your veterinarian or an emergency veterinary clinic