

TOXIC STUFF – DANGEROUS IF NOT FATAL TO YOUR DOG



Here is a quick reference guide to the more common house and garden plants and foods that are toxic to most all animals and children. If you have these plants, foods or items, it's a pretty safe bet they should be kept away from pets and children. Puppies and small children seem to find that everything needs to be "tasted"..... sometimes that's a deadly decision.

C = cardiovascular toxin

GI = gastrointestinal toxin

R = respiratory toxin

N = neurological toxin

KO = kidney/organ failure

* = Substance is especially dangerous and can be fatal.

Alcohol (all beverages, ethanol, methanol, isopropyl) N

PLANTS

Almonds* (kernel in the pit contains cyanide) R, *

Amaryllis bulb* GI, N, *

Anthurium* KO, *

Apricot* (kernel in the pit contains cyanide) R, *

Autumn crocus (Colchicum autumnale)* GI, C, VERY POISONOUS, *

Avocado (leaves, seeds, stem, skin)* C, FATAL TO BIRDS, KO, *

Azalea (entire rhododendron family) C, GI, N

Begonia* KO, *

Bird of Paradise GI

Bittersweet GI

Bleeding heart* C, *

Boxwood GI

Bracken fern N

Buckeye GI, N

Buttercup (Ranunculus) GI

Caffeine GI, N

Caladium * KO, *

Calla lily* KO, *

Castor bean* (can be fatal if chewed) GI, C, N, *

Cherry (kernel in the pit contains cyanide) R

Chinese sacred or heavenly bamboo* R, contains cyanide

Chocolate* GI, N, *

Choke cherry, unripe berries* R, contains cyanide, *

Chrysanthemum (a natural source of pyrethrins) GI, N
 Clematis GI
 Crocus bulb GI, N
 Croton (Codiaeum sp.) GI
 Cyclamen bulb GI
 Delphinium, larkspur, monkshood* N, *
 Dumb cane (Dieffenbachia)* GI, R, severe mouth swelling, *
 Elderberry, unripe berries* R, contains cyanide, *
 English ivy (All Hedera species of ivy) GI
 Fig (Ficus) General allergan, dermatitis
 Four-o'clocks (Mirabilis) GI
 Foxglove (Digitalis)* C, can be fatal, *
 Garlic* (raw or spoiled) GI, *
 Hyacinth bulbs GI
 Hydrangea* R, contains cyanide,*
 Holly berries GI
 Iris corms GI
 Jack-in-the-pulpit* KO, *
 Jimson weed* R, *
 Kalanchoe* C, can be fatal,*
 Lantana* KO (liver failure), *
 Lily (bulbs of most species) GI
 Lily-of-the-valley* C, can be fatal, *
 Lupine species N
 Marijuana or hemp (Cannabis)* N, GI, can be fatal, *
 Milkweed* C, *
 Mistletoe berries* N, C, shock, *
 Morning glory* N, Seeds toxic to birds, *
 Mountain laurel C
 Narcissus, daffodil (Narcissus) GI
 Oak* (remove bark for use as a bird perch) KO, *
 Oleander* C, very poisonous, can be fatal,*
 Onions* (raw or spoiled) GI, *
 Peach* (kernel in the pit contains cyanide) R, *
 Pencil cactus/plant* (Euphorbia sp.) GI, dermatitis, *
 Philodendron (all species)* KO, *
 Poinsettia (many hybrids, avoid them all) GI, dermatitis
 Potato (leaves and stem) GI, N
 Rhubarb leaves* KO, *
 Rosary Pea (Arbus sp.)* (Can be fatal if chewed) GI, C, N, *
 Scheffelera (umbrella plant)* KO, *
 Shamrock (Oxalis sp.)* KO, *
 Spurge (Euphorbia sp.) GI
 Tomatoes (leaves and stem) GI, N
 Yew* C, fatal to most animals, *

DRUGS

Animal poisoning by drugs is by far the most common type of small animal poison exposure. Dogs can be poisoned by human or veterinary drugs as a result of accidental ingestion or overdose. Pain killers, cold medicines, anti-cancer drugs, antidepressants, vitamins, and diet pills can be lethal, even in small doses. Human over-the-counter pain relievers are occasionally used in veterinary medicine for pain relief, but they should only be given upon specific advice and direction of a veterinarian. Acetaminophen (Tylenol) should never be given to dogs or cats. Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (aspirin, ibuprofen, phenylbutazone, naproxen) are prescribed with caution by veterinarians to relieve pain from arthritis and other conditions. Dosages, however, are much lower than human dosages. Any medications need to be discussed with and prescribed by a veterinarian prior to giving them to your pet to avoid an inadvertent and tragic poisoning.

HOUSEHOLD PRODUCTS

The toxic active ingredient in the substance a dog is exposed to determines how much danger is present. It is critical in any case of potential poisoning to find the container of the toxic substance and know the ingredients when seeking advice or veterinary care. Many of these products are extremely toxic and any delay in evaluation of the dog can be life threatening.

Ant Poisons/Miscellaneous Insecticides designed to kill ants, termites, wasps, snails, slugs, garden pests and many other nuisance insects: These products present a risk when a dog is accidentally exposed to the poison, usually by eating the bait or poison. Active ingredients are grouped into two categories: organophosphates and carbarnates. Other types of insecticides contain chlorinated hydrocarbon compounds, pyrethrins, or arsenic.

Antifreeze is a poison that has a sweet taste. Spilled or leaked antifreeze is lapped up by many dogs and cats in quantities sufficient to cause severe sickness or death. Less than one tablespoon of antifreeze can be lethal to a 20 pound dog. Similar products like windshield washer fluid and frost removers are also toxic.

Cleaning Products, including toilet bowl cleaners, bleach, detergents, caustics (e.g., Drano, Ajax), pine oils and others, are highly poisonous to living tissue if a dog or cat eats or becomes exposed to the chemicals in the cleaner.

Flea Products create few problems when used as directed on the label. Almost all topical flea preparations (dips, sprays, etc.) can be poisonous if not used in accordance with label instructions. If you have a problem with fleas, discuss with your veterinarian the use of some of the safer new products to rid your pet of fleas, such as AdvantageTM or FrontlineTM.

Heavy Metals such as lead, zinc and mercury can poison an animal as the result of ingestion. Heavy metals can be found in lead fishing weights, lead shot, batteries, lead-containing paint, caulking, motor oil, pennies, antiseptics, artist's supplies, and lubricants.

Rodenticides used to kill rats, mice, gophers, moles and other mammalian pests are highly toxic and any such poisons designed to kill small mammals need to be inaccessible to pets (carefully contained in closed metal cabinets or high on stable shelving). The poisons usually come in flimsy cardboard containers and any dog, puppy or cat can chew through the container to get at the bait. Rodenticides are classified according to both their basic ingredients and by how they act on their target. These categories include: anti-coagulant rodenticides, cholecalciferol, strychnine, zinc phosphide, bromethalin, compound 1080, and others. If accidental ingestion of rat poison is suspected, contact your veterinarian immediately, even if your pet is showing no obvious signs of being ill.

Garbage/Food Poisoning is primarily a problem of pets that roam freely around the farm or neighborhood with easy access to 'road kill', garbage cans, etc. Any animal that eats decaying, rotten carcasses or other food material (e.g., left-over hamburger) that has been contaminated by bacteria and bacterial-produced toxins is susceptible to poisoning. The toxicity of the rotten food lies largely in toxins produced by bacteria in the food material ingested by the pet and can cause severe gastrointestinal upset. Severely affected animals can go into shock and even die as a result of the absorbed bacterial toxins. Other food items that could be dangerous include onions, onion powder, alcoholic beverages, yeast dough, coffee (grounds, beans, chocolate covered espresso beans), tea (caffeine), salt, macadamia nuts, hops, tobacco products, and any moldy or spoiled foods.

Chocolate is poisonous if ingested in sufficient quantities. Only a moderate amount needs to be eaten by a dog, approximately 1/2 oz of baking chocolate per pound of body weight and less in some animals.

Miscellaneous items that can be dangerous include mothballs, potpourri oils, homemade play dough, and fabric softener sheets.

