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### Pets chew poisonous plants

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Many plants found in and around the house are dangerous to pets that play with or eat them. Refer to the section [Plants](#) for information about identifying potentially harmful plants.

1. Remove any plant parts remaining in the mouth and attempt to rinse around the mouth with water. Do not use a forceful stream from the hose directed at the back of the mouth as you may force water into the animal's lungs. Allow the animal to drink a small amount of water (one glass).
2. Look for changes in the skin around the mouth, eyes, or paws, such as swelling, reddening, or blisters.
3. Watch for excessive or foamy salivation.
4. Identify the plant your pet ate.
5. Call the poison center or veterinarian.
6. Always take the suspected plant or remaining parts of the plant with you if going to the veterinarian's office or an emergency clinic.
7. Never try to induce vomiting by sticking your finger down your pet's throat.

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### Dangerous foods

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Many foods that are fine for people are not safe for dogs.

Raisins and grapes can cause vomiting, diarrhea and kidney failure in dogs; the minimum amount that is safe is unknown, so keep these foods away from your pet.

Chocolate is toxic to canines; the darker the chocolate, the more harmful. Eating chocolate can cause a dog to experience excitement, increased urination, muscle tremor seizures and rapid heart rate.

Sugarless gums and candies with the sugar alcohol called xylitol can cause a rapid drop in your dog's blood sugar.

Onions have a chemical that damages blood cells and can cause anemia in dogs. Even one small whole onion can cause death.

Macadamia nuts have a compound that can temporarily paralyze a dog's hind legs. The dog will recover with no treatment and no long-term effects.

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### More about medications

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Pets do not react to medications the same as humans. Trying to adjust the amount of medicine to give a pet based on the amount to give to a child or adult normally does not work and may result in the death of a loved pet or needless suffering due to a drug that does not work. It is very important to ask a veterinarian about which medicines can safely be given to a pet.

Some **examples of the dangers** are listed below.

Aspirin, Tylenol and other over-the-counter pain medications can be very dangerous for pets.

Cats should not be given any medication containing aspirin, phenylbutazone, indomethacin, ibuprofen, naproxen, or acetaminophen as they may cause serious illness or death.

In dogs, naproxen is very dangerous, ibuprofen can cause stomach bleeding and vomiting, and indomethacin is toxic. The amount of aspirin given to dogs is very small and usually given only once or twice a day. It is very important to ask your veterinarian what drugs can be given safely and in what amounts.

Cats are particularly sensitive to any medication containing morphine, codeine or similar products. These products result in excitement of the animal and may result in death.

Do not give your pet antibiotics that were prescribed for humans or other pets. Certain antibiotics are prescribed for certain types of infections and may not be effective for the particular problem of your pet.

Topical antibiotics such as bacitracin and neomycin may be applied to cuts or scrapes, but the injury should be watched closely for swelling, reddening and puss until healed. If this occurs seek the advice of your veterinarian. Bites and punctures require special care and are best handled by veterinarians.

As everyone knows, dogs eat nearly anything and they probably won't stop eating till it's gone. That does not mean everything is good for them. As responsible masters, we must choose wisely what we feed our pets. They can't make smart choices on their own. After all, dogs drink out of toilets!

Although it may appeal to them, chocolate is the biggest no-no for dogs. It can cause vomiting, diarrhea, hyperactivity, panting, abnormal heart rhythm, tremors, seizures, and even death.

Garlic, leeks, and onions can cause alter a dogs' red blood cells, so they should be avoided. (A few flakes in a recipe may not cause noticeable harm, but dogs should not have this.)

Fruit and dogs generally do not mix. Grapes and raisins can cause canine kidney failure. Apples, peaches, and cherries can contain small amounts of cyanide, which is toxic to dogs. Citrus plants have been connected to irritation and possibly even central nervous system depression in dogs.

Grease from bacon or sausages can lead to vomiting, diarrhea, and even pancreatic inflammation. The scent of bacon frying may bring your dog to your side in the kitchen, but feeding it to him is a bad idea.

Processed lunchmeats (such as bologna) contain sodium nitrates, and fat, so they are a poor nutritional choice for a dog.

Tomatoes and potatoes may contain solanine, which can lead to drooling, severe gastrointestinal upset (vomiting and diarrhea), loss of appetite, drowsiness, central nervous system depression, confusion, behavioral changes, weakness, dilated pupils and slowed heart rate in dogs.

Peppers contain capsaicin, which irritates a dog's skin, nose, eyes, and gastrointestinal system.

Popcorn can be a choking hazard for pets. The hulls and seeds are not digestible, so this is clearly a problem as well.

Uncooked meat or eggs may cause E. coli or Salmonella in dogs, as in humans.

Alcoholic beverages are bad for pets. They can cause vomiting, diarrhea, lack of coordination, central nervous system depression, tremors, difficulty breathing, metabolic imbalances and coma. It is neither funny nor kind to share a beer with your dog.

Other harmful foods include avocados, coffee and tea, moldy cheese, onions, macadamian nuts, and anything with bones in it. Bones can splinter or break into sharp pieces that may cause internal bleeding or blockages in dogs.

Large amounts of dairy items can cause vomiting or diarrhea. Fatty, spicy, and salty foods are best avoided as well.

It's best to stick with the program. Dogs do best when they are fed products prepared for canine consumption. Because of their sheltered lives, their digestive systems simply are not equipped to handle a wide variety of foods that might not irritate their counterparts in the wild.

If your dog does manage to eat a harmful or questionable food, call your veterinarian immediately. Do not give attempt to give him Pepto-Bismol or other products intended for humans. In dogs, these formulas can lead to gastric irritation or ulcers, bleeding problems, seizures and liver damage. Appropriate dosages are unknown, and medicines can be harmful, or even fatal, to canines.

Learn more about this author, [LINDA ANN NICKERSON](#).

**Below are the top articles rated and ranked by Helium members on:**

## **Common foods poisonous to dogs**

<http://www.helium.com/tm/181572/everyone-knows-nearly-anything>

**Alcohol** can cause breathing difficulties, abnormal blood acidity, coma and death in dogs. At parties, don't let anyone offer your dog a 'drink.'

**Avocados** contain persin which can cause digestive upsets and heart problems.

**Bones** may splinter and puncture or obstruct the digestive tract.

**Broccoli** in large amounts can cause illness in dogs.

**Chocolate, coffee and tea** all contain stimulants that cause abnormal heartbeat, seizures and death in dogs. Chocolate is especially dangerous for dogs.

**Corn on the cob** is dangerous. Even though the corn will be digested, chunks of cob may obstruct the digestive tract

**Grapes and raisins** contain an unknown substance that causes kidney failure in dogs.

**Liver** in large amounts can cause Vitamin A toxicity.

**Macadamia nuts** contain an unidentified toxin that causes weakness, tremors, panting and swelling in the legs.

**Walnuts** may have a fungus or mold which causes drooling, jaundice, lack of coordination, and vomiting.

**Milk** is difficult for some dogs to digest effectively, which leads to G.I. upsets.

**Mushrooms and molds** can be toxic to dogs. Some varieties are more toxic than others.

**Nutmeg** is a seasoning that causes tremors, seizures, and death in dogs.

**Onions and garlic**, both cooked and raw, contain thiosulphate which can cause digestive upsets, hemolytic anemia, and death. Onions contain more of the toxin than garlic does.

**Raw egg whites** contain avidin which causes B vitamin deficiency, skin problems and skeletal deformities. Raw eggs can also harbor salmonella or e.coli.

**Raw fish**, especially salmon, may contain [parasites](#) that are dangerous for dogs.

**Seeds and fruit pits** can cause choking or intestinal blockages and some contain cyanide which is toxic to dogs.

**Xylitol** causes an insulin reaction in dogs which can lead to liver failure within a few days. It's found in many candies, gums, toothpastes, and pastries.

**Greasy, fatty table scraps** can cause pancreatitis in dogs. Pancreatitis is an inflammation of the pancreas caused when too much digestive enzyme is produced. Affected dogs may have bloody vomit or diarrhea and suffer dehydration and even death.

Snacks shared with your dog need to be checked for hidden ingredients. Some foods such as cookies, gravies, and even some baby foods, can contain chocolate, nuts, onions, excessive salt or sugar, or other items dangerous for dogs. Keeping garbage cans secured is a good idea too.

**Pennies** are another danger to dogs worth mentioning. Those dated after 1981 are made from zinc with a thin copper coating. A dog swallowing just one of these pennies can suffer damage to red blood cells and kidney failure, due to zinc poisoning.

## Household hazards to Pets

Every home contains a variety of everyday items and substances that can be dangerous or even fatal if ingested by dogs and cats. You can protect your pet's health by becoming aware of the most common health hazards found in many pet-owning households.

### HAZARDS IN THE KITCHEN

#### Foods

Many foods that are perfectly safe for humans could be harmful or potentially deadly to dogs and cats. To be safe, keep the following food items out of your pet's menu:

coffee grounds grapes/raisins  
chocolate onions  
yeast dough tea  
macadamia nuts alcohol  
fatty foods salt

avocado garlic  
chewing gum, candy and breath fresheners containing xylitol

Always keep garbage out of a pet's reach, as rotting food contains molds or bacteria that could produce food poisoning.

#### Cleaning Products

Many household cleaners can be used safely around cats and dogs. However, the key to safe use lies in reading and following product directions for proper use and storage.

For instance, if the label states "keep pets and children away from area until dry," follow those directions to prevent possible health risks. Products containing bleach can safely disinfect many household surfaces when used properly, but can cause stomach upset, drooling, vomiting or diarrhea, severe burns if swallowed and respiratory tract irritation can occur if inhaled in a high enough concentration. In addition, skin contact with concentrated solutions may produce serious chemical burns. Some detergents can produce a similar reaction, and cats can be particularly sensitive to certain ingredients such as phenols.

As a general rule, store all cleaning products in a secure cabinet out of the reach of pets and keep them in their original packaging, or in a clearly labeled and tightly sealed container.

#### Insecticides/Rodenticides

As with household cleaners, read and follow label instructions before using any type of pesticide in your pet's environment. For example, flea and tick products labeled "for use on dogs only" should not be applied to cats or other species, as serious or even life-threatening problems could result. Always consult with your veterinarian about the safe use of these products for your pet.

If a pet ingests rat or mouse poison, potentially serious or even life-threatening illness can result; therefore, when using any rodenticide, it is important to place the poison in areas completely inaccessible to pets.

### HAZARDS IN THE BATHROOM

#### Medications

Medications that treat human medical conditions can make pets very sick. Never give your pet any medication unless directed by your veterinarian. As a rule, the following medicines should be tightly closed and stored in a secure cabinet above the counter and away from pets:

Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs such as aspirin, ibuprofen or naproxen  
acetaminophen diet pills antihistamines  
cold medicines vitamins antidepressants  
prescription drugs

#### Soaps and other Sundries

Bath and hand soaps, toothpaste and sun blocks should also be kept away from your pets. They can cause stomach upset, vomiting or diarrhea. Keep toilet lids closed to

prevent your pets from consuming treated toilet bowl water that could irritate their digestive tract.

#### HAZARDS IN THE BEDROOM AND LIVING ROOM

While they may smell good, many liquid potpourri products contain ingredients that can cause oral ulcerations and other problems, so keep them out of the reach of your pets.

Just one mothball has the potential to sicken a dog or cat and mothballs that contain naphthalene can cause serious illness, including digestive tract irritation, liver, kidney and blood cell damage, swelling of the brain tissues, seizures, coma, respiratory tract damage (if inhaled) and even death (if ingested). Tobacco products, pennies (those minted after 1982 contain zinc) and alkaline batteries (like those in your remote controls) can also be hazardous when ingested.

#### HAZARDS IN THE GARAGE AND YARD

##### Antifreeze, Herbicides and Insecticides

Ethylene glycol-containing antifreeze and coolants, even in small quantities, can be fatal to both dogs and cats. While antifreeze products containing propylene glycol are less toxic than those containing ethylene glycol, they can still be dangerous. In addition to antifreeze, other substances routinely stored in the garage including insecticides, plant/lawn fertilizers, weed killers, ice-melting products and gasoline also pose a threat to your pet's health if ingested.

When chemical treatments are applied to grassy areas, be sure and keep your pet off the lawn for the manufacturer's recommended time. If pets are exposed to wet chemicals or granules that adhere to their paws, they may lick it off later; stomach upset or more serious problems could result.

##### Paints and Solvents

Paint thinners, mineral spirits, and other solvents are dangerous and can cause severe irritation or chemical burns if swallowed or if they come in contact with your pet's skin. While most latex house paints typically produce a minor stomach upset, some types of artist's or other specialty paints may contain heavy metals or volatile substances that could become harmful if inhaled or ingested.

##### Plants – Inside or Around the House

There are many household and yard plants that can sicken your pet. Some of the most commonly grown greenery that should be kept away from pets include:

Lily of the Valley, oleander, azalea, yew, foxglove, rhododendron and kalanchoe may cause heart problems if ingested.

Rhubarb leaves and shamrock contain substances that can produce kidney failure. Certain types of lilies (*Lilium* and *Heimerocallis* species) are highly toxic to cats, resulting in kidney failure — even if only small amounts are ingested.

Sago palms (Cycad species) can cause liver damage, especially if the nut portion of the plant is consumed. Additionally, fungi such as certain varieties of mushrooms can cause liver damage or other illnesses.

A few other potentially harmful plants include philodendron, corn plant, castor bean, mother-in-law's tongue, Hibiscus and hydrangea.

For a complete listing of common toxic and non-toxic plants, visit [www.apcc.asPCA.org](http://www.apcc.asPCA.org).

#### OTHER HOUSEHOLD HAZARDS

Small items that fall on the floor can be easily swallowed by a curious cat or dog. Such items include coins, buttons, small children's toys, medicine bottles, jewelry, nails, and screws. The result may be damage to your pet's digestive tract and the need for surgical removal of the object.

While electrical cords are especially tempting to puppies who like to chew on almost anything, even an adult dog or cat could find them of interest; burns or electrocution could result from chewing on live cords. Prevent this by using cord covers and blocking access to wires.

#### HOLIDAY HAZARDS

Don't forget that holidays and visitors can pose a special challenge to your pets. Discourage well-meaning guests from spoiling pets with extra treats and scraps from the dinner table. Fatty, rich or spicy foods can cause vomiting and diarrhea and lead to inflammation of the pancreas. Poultry or other soft bones can splinter and damage your pet's mouth or esophagus.

While trick or treating is fun for children, it can be hazardous to pets. Halloween treats such as chocolate or candy sweetened with xylitol can make a harmful snack. Certain Halloween and Christmas decorations (especially tinsel, ribbons and ornaments) also pose a hazard to pets, so make sure nothing is left on the floor or on tables within reach.

String-like items can damage your pet's intestine and could prove fatal if not surgically removed. While poinsettia is not deadly as popular legend would have it, it could still cause an upset stomach if consumed. Holly and mistletoe are especially dangerous plants. Christmas tree water treated with preservatives (including fertilizers) can also cause an upset stomach. Water that is allowed to stagnate in tree stands contains bacteria that, if ingested, could lead to nausea, vomiting and diarrhea.

#### A Special Note of Caution to Bird Owners

Just like dogs and cats, most hazards listed here apply to your pet bird, particularly if it is allowed to roam freely outside of its cage. In addition, birds have unique respiratory tracts that are especially vulnerable to inhaled particles and fumes from aerosol products, tobacco products, certain glues, paints, air fresheners and any other aerosolized matter. Birds should never be allowed in areas where such

products are being used. As a rule, birds should never be kept in kitchens because cooking fumes, smoke and odors can present a hazard.

From the AVMA website

<http://canines.mobi/node/100>

### **Call the ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center**

The telephone number is (888) 426-4435. There is a \$55 consultation fee for this service.

Be ready with the following information:

- the species, breed, age, sex, weight and number of animals involved
- the animal's symptoms
- information regarding the exposure, including the agent (if known), the amount of the agent involved and the time elapsed since the time of exposure.

Have the product container/packaging available for reference.

Please note: If your animal is having seizures, losing consciousness, is unconscious or is having difficulty breathing, telephone ahead and bring your pet immediately to your local veterinarian or emergency veterinary clinic. If necessary, he or she may call the APCC.

## **TEN MOST COMMON POISONOUS PLANTS**

### **Marijuana**

Ingestion of *Cannabis sativa* by companion animals 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 spp.* are considered to be highly toxic to cats. While the poisonous component has not yet been identified, it is clear that with even ingestions of very small amounts of the plant, severe kidney damage could result.

### **Tulip/Narcissus bulbs**

The bulb portions of *Tulipa/Narcissus spp.* 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 spp.* 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.

**Castor Bean**

The poisonous principle in *Ricinus communis* is ricin, a highly toxic protein that can produce severe abdominal pain, drooling, vomiting, diarrhea, excessive thirst, weakness and loss of appetite. Severe cases of poisoning can result in dehydration, muscle twitching, tremors, seizures, coma and death.

**Cyclamen**

*Cyclamen* species contain cyclamine, but the highest concentration of this toxic component 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.

**Kalanchoe**

This plant contains components that can produce gastrointestinal irritation, as well as those that are toxic to the heart, and can seriously affect cardiac rhythm and rate.

**Yew**

*Taxus spp.* contains a toxic component known as taxine, which causes central nervous system effects such as trembling, incoordination, and difficulty breathing. It can also cause significant gastrointestinal irritation and cardiac failure, which can result in death.