



PRESS RELEASE
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FOR MORE INFORMATION

Kathy Finnie, Executive Director
Vermont Veterinary Medical Association
802-878-6888
Kathy@vtvets.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Take Time to Check Your Home for Poisons!

by M. Kathleen Shaw DVM
Vermont Veterinary Medical Association

March 18-24 is Animal Poison Prevention Week, and veterinarians are spreading the word about some common poisons for our animals large and small (including exotic animals). While many of us believe our homes are safe from toxins that animals would ingest, you might be surprised at what can cause serious illness.

Garden products such as fertilizers, herbicides, and fungicides are highly poisonous to our animals. Certain plants, both indoor and outdoor can be dangerous too. Take an inventory of your indoor and landscaping plants and go to the ASPCA Poison Control website (see below) to make sure they are not toxic to your animals. This includes in and around the pastures, where horses and livestock can reach over and sample them. For instance, Japanese Yews, commonly used in landscaping, is extremely poisonous, resulting in rapid cardiac arrest and death if consumed. Bouquets of flowers and plants may contain lilies, which are highly toxic to cats in particular. Just sniffing the pollen or chewing on a leaf can cause kidney failure and death if not treated promptly.

It's not surprising that the products formulated to kill pests can be toxic to our domestic animals. Rodenticides (rat and mice poison) and insecticides are highly toxic to dogs and cats and can lead to death if not detected early. Always read the label and follow the instructions. If your pet gets into rat poison or an insecticide, *have the package or bottle with you when you call and take your pet to the vet.* There are many types of these poisons, and the knowing the active ingredients in what your pet ate will help your veterinarian to determine the treatment to save your pet. Large animal owners should follow label precautions carefully when using insecticides around the animals and in pastures.

Many foods that people love are highly toxic to pets. The ASPCA Poison Control Center receives on average 39 calls per day of dogs who have ingested chocolate! Brownies, candy bars, and especially dark chocolate are highly toxic to dogs. Healthy foods for people such as onions, garlic, grapes, and raisins can cause serious trouble in pets. Veterinarians are seeing more pets who become seriously ill from eating food or gum containing Xylitol, an artificial sweetener. Xylitol is used to sweeten certain brands of peanut butter: pet owners can unwittingly poison their dogs while trying to give medication hidden in it so check the label.

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The top three poisons reported by Poison Control for small animals include veterinary products, over-the-counter human medications, and human prescription medications. We've all had the joy of trying to get a dog or cat to accept its pill: it often turns into a circus. In response, many veterinary joint supplements, pain medications, and medication for urinary incontinence are now flavored for ease of administration. The problem lies with the fact that these new flavored pills taste so good the dog wants to eat the entire bottle, leading to serious illness. Ibuprofen remains the number one over the counter pill ingested by dogs and human prescription medications of all types can cause illness in our pets.

Common sense precautions can prevent poisoning of our pets. Keep all human and animal medications in a cupboard up high and out of reach of pets. Simply pushing them back on the kitchen or bathroom counter is not good enough. You may think your pet can't or won't get up on the counters, but it happens all the time. Store garden products in a shed away from pets. Read the labels and follow precautions on insecticides, fertilizers, and rodenticides. Do your research on the plants you already have and before purchasing any new ones to make sure they are not toxic to your animals. If you think your pet got into something potentially toxic, call your veterinarian or Poison Control right away. Some poisons, don't show signs for several days, but prompt treatment before so may save your animal's life.

The ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center (<https://www.asPCA.org/pet-care/animal-poison-control> or phone (888) 426-4435) is your best resource for animal poison-related emergencies 24/7. Last year they helped pet owners with over 180,000 cases. On their website, you can learn about poisonous plants (by name or picture), people foods to avoid, household products, and you can even download a mobile app for Poison Control. Keep the phone number handy, along with your veterinarian's, in case you ever need it.

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The Vermont Veterinary Medical Association (VVMA), founded in 1898, is a professional organization of 375 veterinarians dedicated to compassionate animal care and quality medicine.