



# Top Household Pet Poisons

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The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) has an Animal Poison Control Center. This center handles over 180,000 cases of pet poisonings every year. Many of the items are common in every house but may not appear to cause a problem to most people. According to the ASPCA, the number one cause of poisonings in pets is over-the-counter human medications. Ibuprofen, found in Advil and Motrin, can cause kidney failure and stomach ulcers. Alprazolam, the main ingredient in Xanax, in large doses, can cause agitation, weakness, and collapse. Adderall, a drug used for Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), can cause increased heart rate, increased body temperature, hyperactivity, tremors and seizures. Naproxen, found in Aleve and Naprosyn, causes stomach ulcers and kidney failure, even at small doses. Venlafaxine, found in Effexor, an antidepressant used in humans, causes agitation, tremors and seizures. Acetaminophen, found in Tylenol, is a common pain killer in humans. Cats are particularly sensitive to Tylenol which causes liver damage and damage to red blood cells. Zolpidem, found in Ambien, is a sleep-aid in people. In pets, however, it causes agitation and elevated heart rates. Clonazepam, found in Klonopin, is used as an anti-anxiety and anticonvulsant in humans. In pets, however, it can produce low blood pressure, weakness and collapse.

Also in the top offenders are insecticides, certain human foods, cleaning products, certain plants, rodenticides, lawn/garden products, and veterinary medications. Insecticides often contain organophosphates and carbamates. These are extremely toxic to dogs and cats and can cause vomiting, diarrhea, lack of coordination, muscle tremors, respiratory failure, and seizures. Examples of organophosphates and carbamates include coumaphos, fention, cyothioate, diazinon, fampfhur, tetrachlorvinphos, acephate, chlorpyrifos, fonofos, malathion, parathion, and terbufos. It is imperative to check the label ingredients to avoid a serious toxic event in your pet.

Certain human foods can also be toxic to dogs and cats. These foods include alcohol, caffeine (coffee, soda, tea), chives, chocolate, grapes, raisins, onions, yeast dough, and xylitol. Xylitol is found in sugarless gum, candy, toothpaste, and some baking products. Xylitol can also be seen on the ingredient list as Eutrit, Kannit, Newtol, Xylite, Torch and Xyliton. This has recently been added to certain peanut butters and

can cause hypoglycemia (low blood glucose) and liver failure in less than 24 hours.

Common household and outdoor plants can also be toxic to your pets. Some examples of plants toxic to both dogs and cats include American Holly, American Yew, Bird of Paradise (flower part), Calla Lily, Daffodil, Dieffenbachia, Foxglove, Hyacinth, Hydrangea and Lily of the Valley.

Veterinary medications can be toxic if the incorrect amount is given, if the wrong medication is given, or if the medication is given to the wrong pet in the household. If you suspect that your pet ingested a toxic substance, call your veterinarian immediately for assistance. Additionally, the ASPCA's **Poison Control Center's hotline is 888-426-4435. The Pet Poison Helpline number is 855-764-7661.** There is a small consultation fee, but it is well worth it. You may just save your pet's life. Remember, dogs and cats are not tiny humans. They have different metabolisms and ways of processing substances.

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