

## Protecting your pets against poisoning

There are many poisonous substances that we and our pets come across, but do you know what they are and how to prevent accidents? Here, you will find further information on the most common substances that poison our pets year on year plus tips on how to keep yourself and your pets safe.

Most common pet poisoning claims	
Accidental ingestion of medications (pet or human drugs)	5,131
Rodenticide	4,028
Methylxanthine toxicity (chocolate, caffeine)	3,661
Plant poisoning	2,808
Household chemicals	1,669
Metaldehyde (snail, slug poison)	396
Insecticide	323
Heavy metal toxicity (lead, zinc)	288
Toad poisoning	270
Antifreeze poisoning	213
Walnut poisoning	100
Alcohol toxicity	75

Most common pet poisoning claims Veterinary Pet Insurance Co. (VPI) received between 2005 and 2009.

### Prevention tips

- Designed for pets?*  
Never give your pets medicines that are not specifically designed for pets. This includes vitamin and mineral and other dietary supplements. Keep all medicines out of children's and pets' reach.
- Follow Directions*  
Always follow directions on how to use and safely store poisonous chemicals such as weed-killers, insecticides, anti-freeze, etc
- Keep out of reach*  
Potentially poisonous substances like household chemicals (bleach, disinfectants, cleansers) should always be kept out of reach, not just of children but all pets too. You should also be aware of this when using any kind of pest control (mouse and rat poisons, moth and other insect repellents, etc).
- Know your plants*  
It is important that you are aware if any of your house or garden plants are poisonous. If you do have poisonous plants keep them out of reach of pets.
- Toxic Food*  
Never feed your pet any food that is mouldy or past its use by date. Remember that chocolate, caffeine, alcohol, grapes and raisins along with many other foods can be poisonous to pets.

## **Symptoms of Poisoning**

Signs that your pet has been poisoned include; collapsing, breathing difficulties, vomiting, diarrhoea, lethargy, decrease in appetite and skin reactions such as redness, swelling and blistering. You should take immediate action if you are concerned that poisoning has occurred.

## **Are you concerned your pet has been poisoned?**

If you suspect your pet has been poisoned there are some simple steps to follow to reduce your pet's suffering. Stay calm, don't panic. You may need to act quickly and efficiently however, panicking could prevent this from happening.

We would advise that you take your pet to the vet with a sample of what you believe may have caused the poisoning. If available, take the packaging with the label so that the poison and the correct treatment can be quickly identified.

## **Pets are Good for People**

Pets provide us with loyalty, companionship, love and affection, as well as the many physical and psychological benefits. The least we can do to repay this is to ensure that we keep them in the best of health. A healthy pet is a happy pet and a happy pet can help us enjoy a much fuller and more rewarding life.

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**For further information, please contact the Pet Health Council on:**

Telephone: 020 7379 6545

Email: [enquiries@pethealthcouncil.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@pethealthcouncil.co.uk)

Website: [www.pethealthcouncil.co.uk](http://www.pethealthcouncil.co.uk)