

Top 10 Pet Toxins of 2011



Both known and unknown toxins can be found hiding in our houses and yards. In 2011, the ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center (APCC) in Urbana, IL, fielded more than 165,900 phone calls about pets exposed to poisonous substances. [Visit our poison app on Facebook.](#)

1. Prescription Human Medications

Almost 25,000 calls last year were about human prescription medications. Pets, especially dogs, are notorious for ingesting any dropped pill. Cardiac and ADHD medications make up a large percentage of these calls. Always make sure to take these medications in a safe place away from your pets.

2. Insecticides

Insecticides were the subject of 11% of calls to the ASPCA in 2011. These include products used on the lawn, in the house and on the pet. The most important thing to do is read the label before you use any insecticide, and never use a product labeled for dogs on cats.

3. Over-the-Counter Human Medications

Over-the-counter medications such as ibuprofen and acetaminophen can kill your pet. Never give any medication to your pet without consulting with your veterinarian first.

4. People Food

Chocolate is still the number one people food that pets ingest (we received over 7,600 calls last year). Too much chocolate can cause vomiting, diarrhea, high heart rate and seizures. The second most common food is xylitol (the sugar substitute). Xylitol can cause seizures and liver failure in dogs.

5. Household Products

It is amazing what animals can find to chew up around the house from fire logs to paint. Some household items may just cause stomach upset, while others can be deadly.

6. Veterinary Medications

Chewable medications make it easy to give your dog or cat a pill. However, this tasty pill can also mean that the pet, if given access, will ingest all the pills in the bottle. Always make sure to keep pet medications out of reach. Contact your veterinarian if your pet ingests more than its proper dose of medication or ingests another pet's medication.

7. Rodenticides

When putting out baits to kill mice and rats, never underestimate the resourcefulness of your pet. Most bait is grain based and is attractive to dogs. Depending on the type of rodenticide, ingestion can cause internal bleeding, kidney failure or seizures.

8. Plants

About 4% of our phone calls are pet parents calling about their animals eating plants. This is one category that cats lead dogs in the number of exposures. Lilies can cause kidney failure and death in cats. Please see our list of [toxic/non-toxic plants](#) for more information.

9. Lawn and Garden Products

Fertilizers, which can be made of dried blood, poultry manure and bone meal, are very attractive to pets, so it is not surprising that we get many calls (almost 3,900 in 2011) on lawn and garden items.

10. Automotive Products

With more people keeping their animals inside (especially cats), the number of animals exposed to automotive products (antifreeze, brake fluid, etc.) has dropped. This is great news since many of these products, if ingested, can be life-threatening to pets.

If you have any reason to suspect your pet has ingested something toxic, please contact your veterinarian or the Animal Poison Control Center's 24-hour hotline at (888) 426-4435.