

March is National Animal Poison Prevention Month

According to the ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center (APCC), in 2015 over-the-counter medications and supplements surpassed prescription medications to top of the list of toxins most commonly ingested by pets and reported to the APCC.

Top ten list of hazards and toxins to keep out of reach of your pets:

- Over-the-counter medications.
- Human prescription medications.
- Insecticides: If label directions are not followed, these products can be very dangerous to pets.
- Human foods: Pets - especially dogs, who ingest human foods more often than cats - can get into serious trouble by ingesting onions, garlic, grapes, raisins, alcohol and xylitol. Xylitol is a natural, sugar-free sweetener commonly found in many chewing gums, mints, foods (pudding, gelatin snacks, etc.), oral rinses, toothpastes, and over-the-counter supplements.
- Household items: The most common items for this category include cleaning products, fire logs and paint.
- Veterinary medications: Chewable medications are very appealing to pets. It is important to follow label instructions and store medications out of the reach of pets.
- Chocolate: The darker the chocolate, the more dangerous it can be. Dogs and cats are both negatively affected by theobromine, the compound found in chocolate. This is a stimulant comparable to “a caffeine high” for people. For dogs and cats it is toxic, causing vomiting and diarrhea. If ingested in large amounts it can cause rapid heart rate, irregular heart rhythm and seizures.
- Indoor and outdoor plants: Be sure to understand the toxicity of plants before putting them in or around your house. Lilies, if ingested even a small amount can be toxic to cats leading to kidney failure. Lily of the Valley can affect the heart. Other toxic plants to watch out for are azaleas and rhododendrons.
- Rodenticides: Rodent poisons can be just as toxic to pets as they are to the mice and rats these products are designed to kill.
- Lawn and garden products: It is important to store lawn and garden products out of the reach of pets.

If all of your precautions fail, and you believe that your pet has been poisoned, contact your veterinarian or emergency veterinary service immediately! Signs of poisoning include listlessness, abdominal pain, vomiting, diarrhea, muscle tremors, lack of coordination, and fever. You can also call the ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center hotline 24 hours a day, seven days a week at 888-426-4435.

Other resources:

<http://www.asPCA.org/pet-care/animal-poison-control>