

# Poison proof your home - helpful advice from Pet Poison Helpline.

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National Poison Prevention Week is March 14-20, 2010. Pet Poison Helpline wants to remind you that preventing poisonings applies to pets as well as people! Given the curious nature of our pets, poison proofing your home is important. Taking simple steps such as making sure the plants in your home are non-toxic or storing your medications in secure areas will significantly reduce the chance that your pet will come in contact with a toxic substance.

Protect your pet by poison proofing your home, room by room.

## Living room

- Learn about your plants! Some common household plants may be toxic to pets (and not people). For example, lilies (*Lilium* and *Hermerocallis spp.*) are especially poisonous to cats, so quickly eliminate them from any bouquets. The ingestion of just 1-2 petals can be fatal to a cat. A list of toxic plants can be found at <http://www.petpoisonhelpline.com/IsThatPoisonous/poisonous-plants-to-avoid/>. Always consult this list before buying new plants for your home.
- Keep home fragrance products, such as simmer pots of liquid potpourri, well out of reach. These products may cause chemical burns if ingested.
- Never spray aerosols or any heavily fragranced products around caged birds. They are especially sensitive to any airborne products.
- Keep ashtrays and smoking cessation products such as nicotine chewing gum or patches out of reach. Even cigarette butts contain enough nicotine to cause poisoning in pets.
- Be careful with batteries! Dogs enjoy chewing on batteries and battery-containing devices such as remote controls and cell phones. If ingested, they can cause serious chemical burns.
- Hang up your purse! Pets love to dig through purses and backpacks which often contain potential pet poisons such as medications, cigarettes or sugar-free gum with xylitol.

## Kitchen

- Know what human foods are poisonous to pets. Watch out for raisins, grapes, macadamia nuts, onions, garlic, unbaked yeast bread dough, fatty foods, and chocolate. More information about human foods that are toxic to pets can be found at <http://www.petpoisonhelpline.com/IsThatPoisonous/KitchenToxins/>
- Keep garbage cans behind closed doors. Trash and compost bins can contain many pet toxins such as cigarette butts, coffee grounds, moldy foods, and chicken bones.
- Keep alcoholic beverages out of reach. Alcohol causes low blood sugar in many pets.

## Bathroom

- Keep medications such as over-the-counter and prescription pills, inhalers and dietary supplements, safely locked up in secure cupboards. Do not leave them on countertops or tables or store them in plastic zippered baggies, which are easily chewed through.
- Never medicate your pets with human products without first contacting your veterinarian. Some common human medications such as acetaminophen (Tylenol) and ibuprofen (Advil) are extremely poisonous to pets.

- Always check the container before giving medication to your pet to make sure it's the correct medication. Also, it is best to store your own medications separately from your pet's. Pet Poison Helpline receives many calls from people who accidentally gave their own medication to a pet.
- Keep pets away from cleaning products. Shut them out of the room while spraying bathroom cleansers or other products.
- Close toilet lids to keep pets from drinking the water, especially if you use automatic chemical tank or bowl treatments.

### **Utility room**

- Keep rodenticides (rat and mouse poison) far away from pets and be mindful of the fact that rodents can transfer the products to locations accessible by pets. Also, certain rodenticides do not have antidotes. If you need to use rodenticides in your home, consult your veterinarian or Pet Poison Helpline in order to select one that is safest for your pet.
- When using insecticides in your home or on your pets, read the label before using. Never use flea and tick products meant for dogs on your cat as they may cause tremors and seizures.
- Keep glues out of reach. Some glues, such as Gorilla Glue®, expand greatly once ingested and require surgical removal. Just one ounce of glue may expand to the size of a basketball! Thus, keep pets out of the room when using glue in a home improvement project.

### **Garage**

- Ethylene glycol (antifreeze) products are extremely toxic and, unfortunately, have a sweet taste that is appealing to pets. Choose propylene glycol-based antifreeze as a safer alternative. If antifreeze is spilled, clean it up immediately or dilute it with several gallons of water.
- Keep all automotive products, such as windshield cleaner fluid or brake fluid, away from pets as they may contain methanol, a toxic alcohol similar to ethylene glycol antifreeze.

### **Yard and garden**

- Dogs like to eat certain fertilizers such as bone meal or blood meal. Keep bags tightly sealed and use products according to label instructions.
- Grub or snail killers—especially those that include metaldehyde—can be harmful to pets. Avoid using them if possible.
- Yard insecticides that contain organophosphates or carbamates can be very dangerous if ingested in high concentrations.
- Keep pets off lawns until commercially sprayed herbicides are dry.

### **About Pet Poison Helpline**

Pet Poison Helpline (PPH) is a service available 24 hours, seven days a week for pet owners and veterinary professionals that require assistance treating a potentially poisoned pet. PPH can provide treatment advice for poisoning cases of all species, including dogs, cats, birds, small mammals, large animals and exotic species. As the most cost-effective option for animal poison control care, Pet Poison Helpline's fee of **\$35.00** per incident includes follow-up consultation for the duration of the poison case. Pet Poison Helpline is available in the US and Canada by calling **800-213-6680**. Additional information can be found online at [www.petpoisonhelpline.com](http://www.petpoisonhelpline.com).