



For Immediate Release

Contacts: Kathy Wahlers
Pet Poison Helpline
952-852-9503

kwahlers@safetycall.com

Twitter: @petpoisonhelp

Natalie Wires
Tunheim Partners
952-851-7207

nwires@tunheim.com

Safe Spring Cleaning That Won't Put Your Pet at Risk

Pet Poison Helpline gives tips for keeping pets safe when spring cleaning

Minneapolis (April 21, 2010) – When the weather warms and spring rolls in, people get the urge to declutter and deep clean their homes and garages. If you're a pet owner, use the tips below from Pet Poison Helpline to make sure your pets stay safe and are kept away from toxic cleaning products.

- **Strong acidic or alkaline cleaners pose highest risk** – the most dangerous cleaning products are those which may cause corrosive injury or chemical burns. These include rust removers, toilet bowl cleaners, lye, drain cleaners and calcium/lime removers.
- **General cleaners are safe in small doses** – cleaners such as glass cleaners, spot removers and most surface cleaners have a wide margin of safety. If ingested in small amounts, most only cause mild vomiting or diarrhea. Also, if they touch pet's skin, they may cause mild irritation. Therefore, it's still wise to keep these products out of reach.
- **Read the label** – cleaning labels can provide helpful information, as long as you understand the terminology. Key words to look for include "danger" and "warning" as this indicates products with higher toxicity or the potential to cause chemical burns. Items that use "caution" as their primary signal word are "less toxic" than those using "danger."
- **Risk varies by type of animal** – birds and other exotic pets may be more sensitive to cleaning products, especially products that are aerosolized. "Birds have a unique respiratory anatomy called air sacs, which results in particular sensitivity to fragrances and aerosolized chemicals," says Dr. Justine Lee, Associate Director of Veterinary Services at Pet Poison Helpline. To be safe, aerosolized products should not be used in the same room as caged or free birds.
- **"Natural" does not always mean "safe"** – some natural products can and will cause just as many problems as more traditional cleaners.
- **No need to worry about Swiffer Wet-Jets** – it is a common internet rumor that Swiffer Wet-Jets are dangerous for dogs. In fact, no evidence exists that suggests Swiffer products are dangerous to animals when used properly.

- When spring cleaning, be safe and keep all pets out of the area of cleaning until the room is well ventilated and all cleaning products have dried.

The best thing any pet owner can do is to be educated on common household toxins, and to make sure you pet-proof your house appropriately. Make sure to keep cleaning products up and out of your pet's reach, but when in doubt, if you think your pet has been poisoned, contact your veterinarian or **Pet Poison Helpline** at 800-213-6680 with any questions or concerns.

About Pet Poison Helpline

Pet Poison Helpline is a service available 24 hours, seven days a week for pet owners and veterinary professionals who require assistance treating a potentially poisoned pet. Pet Poison Helpline's experts can provide treatment advice for poisoning cases in 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** per incident includes all follow-up consultation. 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.

###

Media Note: Representatives from Pet Poison Helpline are available to discuss spring cleaning safety tips as well as other topics pertaining to pet health and safety.