

## Household Hazards and Emergency Care

### Chocolate Toxicity

When a dog eats chocolate, it is best to contact your veterinarian immediately if ingestion is suspected. Depending on the type of chocolate, the amount consumed and the size of the dog, only mild symptoms may be seen (vomiting and diarrhea). Serious symptoms include tremors, seizures and even coma.

Chocolate contains two substances that are toxic to dogs: theobromine and caffeine. Dogs metabolize these items much slower than people do. Both are stimulants to the central nervous system. If too much chocolate is ingested then the increased stimulus may cause an increase in blood pressure and irregular heart rhythms or possibly even death.

It is important to know the type of chocolate consumed as some are much more toxic than others. Dark or baker's chocolate are more toxic than milk or white chocolate.

Determine how many ounces or grams of chocolate have been consumed by referring to the packaging if possible. Here are some guidelines:

- Hershey's Bar = 1.5oz (43g)
- Toblerone Bar (regular size) = 3.5oz (100g)
- Single Hershey's Kiss = 0.2oz (5.7g)

### When To Seek Emergency Assistance

- Seizure, fainting or collapse
- Eye injury, no matter how mild
- Vomiting or diarrhea – occurring more often than two or three times per hour.
- Allergic reactions such as swelling around the face, or hives, most easily seen on the abdomen.
- Any suspected poisoning including antifreeze, rodent or snail bait or human medication. Cats are especially sensitive to insecticides (such as flea control for dogs) or some petroleum-based products.
- Thermal stress – from being either too cold or too hot, even if the pet seems to have recovered. Core temperature is of great concern.
- Any wound or laceration that is open or bleeding, or any animal bite.
- Trauma, such as being hit by a car, even if the pet does not exhibit symptoms (internal damage is of concern).
- Any respiratory problem: chronic coughing, laboured breathing or near drowning.
- Straining to urinate or defecate.

**Pet Poison HELPLINE 800.213.6680**

**www.petpoisonhelpline.com**

### What to do if your pet is poisoned:

- Remove your pet from the area
- Check to make sure your pet is safe: breathing and acting normally.
- Do NOT give any home antidotes.
- Do NOT induce vomiting without consulting a veterinarian or Pet Poison Helpline.
- If veterinary attention is necessary, contact your veterinarian or emergency veterinary clinic immediately.
- Collect a sample of the toxic substance, along with the packaging, vial or container and save it – you will need the information when you speak with your veterinarian or Pet Poison Helpline expert.
- Additional information at [www.petpoisonhelpline.com/pet-owners/](http://www.petpoisonhelpline.com/pet-owners/)
- A Pet Poison Helpline i Phone App is available.
- Comprehensive list of household poisons [www.petpoisonhelpline.com/poisons/](http://www.petpoisonhelpline.com/poisons/)



Although some other problems aren't life threatening, they may be causing your pet pain and should be taken care of without delay. *Signs of pain include panting, laboured breathing, increased body temperature, lethargy, restlessness, crying out, aggression and loss of appetite.* Some pets seek company when suffering, while others will withdraw.

When in doubt, err on the side of caution. Better to be mistaken about a minor medical problem than to have a pet experience a medical crisis because you guessed incorrectly about a major one.

## Top 10 Pet Poisons (Pet Poison Helpline)

### Dog Poisons

1. Chocolate
2. Insect bait stations
3. Rodenticides (i.e., mouse and rat poison)
4. Fertilizers
5. Xylitol-containing products (i.e., sugar-free gum and candy)
6. Ibuprofen (Advil® or Motrin® in brand name or generic form)
7. Acetaminophen (Tylenol® in brand name or generic form)
8. Silica gel packs
9. Amphetamines (such as ADD/ADHD drugs)
10. Household cleaners

### Cat Poisons

1. Lilies, extremely toxic even in small amounts.
2. Canine pyrethroid insecticides (topical flea and tick medicine designed for dogs but erroneously placed on cats).
3. Household cleaners
4. Rodenticides
5. Paints and varnishes
6. Veterinary non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medications (Rimadyl® or Deramaxx®)
7. Glow sticks/glow jewelry
8. Amphetamines (such as ADD/ADHD drugs)
9. Acetaminophen (Tylenol® in brand name or generic form). Extremely toxic to cats – no safe dose!
10. Ibuprofen (Advil® or Motrin® in brand name or generic form)



## Top Human Medications Poisonous to Pets

*Pets metabolize medications very differently from people. Even seemingly benign over-the-counter or herbal medications may cause serious poisoning in pets.*

1. **NSAIDs (non-steroidal anti-inflammatories Advil®, Aleve® and Motrin®)** Serious stomach and intestinal ulcers as well as kidney failure may develop if ingested.
2. **Acetaminophen (Tylenol®)** May cause damage to a cat's red blood cells, limiting the ability to carry oxygen. Extremely toxic to cats, there is no safe dose. In dogs, it can lead to liver failure and red blood cell damage.
3. **Antidepressants (Effexor®, Cymbalta®, Prozac®, Lexapro®)** May cause serious neurological problems such as sedation, incoordination, tremors and seizures. Some antidepressants also have a stimulant effect leading to dangerously elevated heart rate, blood pressure and body temperature.
4. **ADD/ADHD medications (Conerta®, Adderall®, Ritalin®)** These contain potent stimulants such as amphetamines and methylphenidate which can cause life-threatening tremors, seizures, elevated body temperatures and heart problems.
5. **Benzodiazepines and sleep aids (Xanax®, Klonopin®, Ambien®, Lunesta®)** Some dogs may become agitated instead of sedate. These drugs may cause severe lethargy, incoordination (including walking "drunk") and slowed breathing in pets. In cats, some forms can cause liver failure.
6. **Birth control (estrogen, estradiol, progesterone)** May cause bone marrow suppression. Female pets that are intact (not spayed) are at an increased risk of side effects from estrogen poisoning.
7. **ACE Inhibitors (Zestril®, Altace®)** Angiotensin-converting enzyme inhibitors are commonly used to treat high blood pressure in people and occasionally, pets. Though overdoses can cause low blood pressure, dizziness and weakness, this medication is typically quite safe. Pets ingesting



small amounts can potentially be monitored at home, unless they have kidney failure or heart disease.

8. **Beta-blockers (Tenormin®, Toprol®, Coreg®)** These are used to treat high blood pressure but, unlike the ACE inhibitor, small ingestions may cause serious poisoning in pets. Overdoses can cause life-threatening decreases in blood pressure and very slow heart rate.
9. **Thyroid hormones (Armour desiccated thyroid, Synthroid®)** Large acute overdoses in cats and dogs can cause muscle tremors, nervousness, panting, rapid heart rate and aggression.

### **Pet First Aid Kit** (Keeping Your Pet Safe by Dr. A. Sugar and Dr. T. Woolard)

<b>3% Hydrogen Peroxide</b>	To clean superficial wounds or induce vomiting.
<b>Disposable diapers or sanitary pads</b>	To use as a temporary bandage for bleeding wounds.
<b>Large blanket</b>	To provide warmth, carry or wrap an injured pet. May provide protection for those assisting from bite wounds or scratches when transporting.
<b>Dosing syringe</b>	For accurate dosing of oral medications.
<b>Ear cleanser (for dogs &amp; cats)</b>	To clean ears and prevent ear infections.
<b>Bandaging material (antiseptic pads, cotton, gauze, adhesive bandage material)</b>	To absorb, protect and keep wounds clean.
<b>Thermometer (rectal) – digital is best so there is no chance of breaking.</b>	To determine accurate body temperature (38-39°C or 100-102°F)
<b>KY jelly or petroleum jelly</b>	To lubricate thermometer for taking rectal temperature.
<b>Antibacterial soap</b>	To clean minor or superficial wounds.
<b>Eye flush (saline) or artificial tears</b>	To rinse eyes or debris or chemicals and clean wounds.
<b>Styptic powder (Kwik Stop) or cornstarch</b>	To stop bleeding from a damaged nail.
<b>Antihistamine*</b>	To treat signs associated with an allergic reaction. *Consult a veterinarian regarding specific types and dosing instructions.
<b>Antibacterial ointment*</b>	Topical treatment for minor skin irritations and/or infections. *Consult a veterinarian regarding specific types and dosing instructions.
<b>Shampoo for dogs and cats</b>	A gentle shampoo for cleansing if the pet gets immersed in an irritating substance.
<b>Activated charcoal*</b>	To prevent absorption of toxins after accidental ingestion. Specific use is dependent upon the type of toxin ingested and time elapsed since ingestion. Use ONLY as directed by a veterinarian or Poison Control Center.
<b>Rubbing alcohol</b>	To disinfect rectal thermometer
<b>Muzzle made for pets or rolled gauze to make a temporary muzzle.</b>	To protect yourself from an animal that may bite if sick or injured. Only use if necessary and remove once you are no longer in danger of being bitten. Do not use if animal is having difficulty breathing, vomiting/retching, has an injury to the mouth or is unconscious.
<b>Card with emergency phone numbers</b>	To have your emergency numbers handy when needed!
<b>Rubber gloves (1-2 pairs)</b>	To ensure good hygiene when treating wounds or collecting samples of potential toxins.
<b>Small, clean container with a good seal.</b>	To transport stool/vomit/suspected toxin.
<b>Bandage scissors</b>	To cut bandage materials.
<b>Empty intravenous bag or other durable plastic bag.</b>	To use with gauze as a temporary "boot" to protect a wounded paw or bandaged paw from getting wet and dirty.

