

A Pet Poison Helpline Refresher On Top Toxins During Poison Prevention Week

Tips on the most common items that can put your pet at risk

Minneapolis (March 10, 2010) –The following are some of the most common toxins the veterinarians at Pet Poison Helpline encounter and strongly recommend keeping away from pets.

- **Xylitol:** Many sugarless gums, including some Trident™, Orbit™, and Ice Breaker™ brands as well as candies contain xylitol, a sweetener which is toxic to dogs. Desserts and baked goods can also be made with xylitol. Even small amounts when ingested can result in a life-threatening drop in blood sugar, or with large amounts of ingestion, liver failure. Signs of low blood sugar include vomiting, weakness, difficulty walking, tremors, and seizures. Treatment includes decontamination, checking a blood glucose/sugar level, treating with IV fluids and glucose, liver monitoring tests, and drugs to protect the liver.
- **Pharmaceuticals:** Common human drugs including NSAIDs (i.e. Advil®, Aleve® and Motrin®), acetaminophen (i.e. Tylenol®) and antidepressants (i.e. Effexor®, Cymbalta®, Prozac®, Lexapro) can cause serious harm for your pets. NSAID's may cause your pet to develop serious stomach and intestinal ulcers as well as kidney failure. Acetaminophen may cause damage to a cat's red blood cells, limiting their ability to carry oxygen. In dogs, it leads to liver failure and in large doses, red blood cell damage. Lastly, antidepressant overdoses can lead to neurological problems such as sedation, incoordination, agitation, tremors and seizures.
- **Flowers:** With the Easter holiday and spring right around the corner, flowers will begin to bloom. As beautiful as they are; some flowers can cause toxicity in animals – and some are even deadly. Certain types of lilies – including tiger, day, Asiatic, Easter and Japanese lilies – are highly toxic to cats. Severe kidney failure can result from ingestion of even a few petals, leaves, or even the pollen. In addition, ingestion of certain spring bulbs (i.e. daffodils, tulips, etc) can cause severe vomiting, diarrhea and abdominal pain. More serious reactions include abnormal heart rate or changes in breathing.
- **Chocolate:** With the Easter bunny on his way, make sure your kids know to hide the stash from your dogs. While the occasional chocolate chip within one cookie may not be an issue, certain types of chocolate can be very toxic. Baker's chocolate and dark chocolate pose the biggest problem. Other sources include chewable, flavored multi-vitamins, baked goods, or chocolate-covered espresso beans. The chemical toxicity is due to methylxanthines (a relative of caffeine), and results in vomiting, diarrhea, hyperactivity, an abnormal heart rhythm, seizures, and possibly, death. In smaller dogs, even the wrappers from candy can result in a secondary obstruction in the stomach or intestines. One other important Easter danger to be aware of is the fake Easter grass typically found in Easter baskets as it can prove harmful when ingested by cats.
- **Fertilizers:** Many fertilizers are basic gastrointestinal irritants. However, some are often combined with dangerous chemicals and compounds called organophosphates or carbamates, which can be harmful to pets. Ingestion can result in drooling, watery eyes, urination, defecation, seizures, difficulty breathing, fever and even death. Immediate treatment with an antidote is necessary to improve a pet's chance of survival.
- **Pest Control Products:** Rodent, snail and slug baits are often used to keep pests at bay. However, if ingested, these poisons are extremely harmful to pets. They are highly

toxic and, without immediate veterinary attention, can be fatal. Rodent baits typically can result in blood clotting disorders, brain swelling or kidney failure, depending on which type is used, while snail and slug baits can result in severe tremors or seizures.

The best thing any concerned pet owner can do is get educated on common, everyday toxins, and make to pet-proof their home appropriately. 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.