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Top 10 Dog Poisons

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Each year, there are almost 214,000 cases of pet **poisoning** in the U.S. Many of these were caused by household substances that may seem perfectly harmless to you. But just because something is safe for people doesn't mean it won't hurt beloved pets. Some of the most dangerous **dog** poisons are foods and **medications** we take on a daily basis.

Depending on how a particular substance affects your dog's body and how much was ingested or inhaled, pet poisoning symptoms can include gastrointestinal and neurological problems, cardiac and respiratory distress, **coma**, and even death.

Top 10 Dog Poisons

Dog poison No. 1: Over-the-counter medications. This group contains **acetaminophen (Tylenol)**, **ibuprofen** and **naproxen (Advil, Aleve)**, as well as herbal and nutraceutical products.

Dog poison No. 2: Prescription medications for people. Drugs that might be beneficial or even lifesaving for people can have the opposite effect in pets. And it doesn't always take a large dose to do major damage.

Some of the most common and harmful medications that poison dogs include:

- **Prescription anti-inflammatory and pain medications** can cause **stomach** and intestinal **ulcers** or **kidney failure**.
- **Antidepressants** can cause **vomiting** and, in more serious instances, **serotonin syndrome** -- a dangerous condition that raises temperature, **heart rate**, and **blood pressure**, and may cause **seizures**.
- **Blood pressure medications.**

Dog poison No. 3: People food. Your canine companion may look so cute as they sit there begging for a bite of your **chocolate** cake or a chip covered in guacamole, but not giving them what they want could save their life. Animals have different metabolisms than people. Some foods, such as onions and garlic, as well as beverages that are perfectly safe for people can be dangerous, and sometimes fatal, for dogs.

- **Alcohol.** Symptoms of alcohol poisoning in animals are similar to those in people, and may include vomiting, **breathing problems**, coma and, in severe cases, death.
- **Avocado.** You might think of them as healthy, but avocados have a substance called persin that can act as a dog poison, causing vomiting and **diarrhea**.
- **Macadamia nuts.** Dogs may suffer from a series of symptoms, including weakness, overheating, and vomiting, after consumption of macadamia nuts.
- **Grapes and raisins.** Experts aren't sure why, but these fruits can induce kidney failure in dogs. Even a small number may cause problems in some dogs.
- **Xylitol.** This sweetener is found in many products, including sugar-free gum and candy. It causes a rapid drop in blood sugar, resulting in weakness and **seizures**. **Liver failure** also has been reported in some dogs.

Other foods you should keep away from your pet include tomatoes, mushrooms and most seeds and nuts

Dog poison No. 4: Chocolate. Though not harmful to people, **chocolate** products contain substances called methylxanthines that can cause **vomiting** in small doses, and death if ingested in larger quantities. Darker **chocolate** contains more of these dangerous substances than do white or milk chocolate. The amount of chocolate that could result in death depends on the type of chocolate and the size of the dog. For smaller breeds, just half an ounce of baking chocolate can be fatal, while a larger dog might survive eating 4 ounces to 8 ounces, though 8 ounces would be extremely dangerous. Coffee and **caffeine** have similarly dangerous chemicals.

Dog poison No. 5 Veterinary products -This includes medications as well as flea and tick treatments. Just as we can be sickened or killed by medications intended to help us, cases of pet poisoning by veterinary drugs are not uncommon. Some of the more commonly reported problem medications include painkillers and de-wormers. And you may think you're doing your dog a favor when you apply products marketed to fight fleas and ticks, but thousands of animals are unintentionally poisoned by these products every year. Problems can occur if dogs accidentally ingest these products or if small dogs receive excessive amounts. Talk to your vet about safe OTC products.

Dog poison No. 6: Household products, from cleaners to fire logs. Just as cleaners like bleach can poison people, they are also a leading cause of pet poisoning, resulting in stomach and respiratory tract problems. Not surprisingly, chemicals contained in antifreeze, paint thinner, and chemicals for pools also can act as dog poison. The pet poisoning symptoms they may produce include stomach upset, **depression**, chemical burns, renal failure and death.

Dog poison No. 7: Rodenticides - Unfortunately, many baits used to lure and kill rodents can also look tasty to our pets. If ingested by dogs, they can cause severe problems. The symptoms depend on the nature of the poison, and signs may not start for several days after consumption.

In some instances, the dog may have eaten the poisoned rodent, and not been directly exposed to the toxin.

Dog poison No. 8: Insecticides - Items such as bug sprays and ant baits can be easy for your pet to get into and as dangerous for your pet as they are to the insects.

Dog poison No. 9: Plants. They may be pretty, but plants aren't necessarily pet friendly. Some of the more toxic plants to dogs include:

- **Azaleas and rhododendrons.** These pretty flowering plants contain toxins that may cause vomiting, **diarrhea**, coma, and potentially even death.
- **Tulips and daffodils.** The bulbs of these plants may cause serious **stomach problems**, difficulty breathing, and increased heart rate.
- **Sago palms.** Eating just a few seeds may be enough to cause vomiting, seizures, and **liver failure**.

Dog poison No. 10: Lawn and garden products. Products for your lawn and garden may be poisonous to pets that ingest them.

What to do for suspected dog poisoning

If you think your dog has been poisoned, try to stay calm. It is important to act quickly, but rationally.

First, gather up any of the potential poison that remains – this may be helpful to your veterinarian and any outside experts who assist with the case. If your dog has vomited, collect the sample in case your veterinarian needs to see it.

Then, try to keep your pet calm and call your veterinarian or the ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center (APCC) at (888) 426-4435. Experts at the APCC are available to answer questions and provide guidance 24 hours a day for a \$60 consultation fee. Another option is the Pet Poison Hotline with a fee of \$59 per incident.

Poison Protection: Pet-Proofing Your House

The best way to reduce the chances that your dog will be the victim of pet poisoning is by preventing exposure to dangerous substances. Here are a few suggestions:

- Keep all medications, even those in child-proof bottles, in cabinets that are inaccessible to your dog. If you inadvertently drop a pill on the floor, be sure to look for it immediately. Supervise anyone, such as the elderly, who may need help taking medications.
- Always follow guidelines on flea or tick products.
- Although you can safely give some "people foods" to your pet as a treat, others are toxic. If you have any questions about what is safe, ask your veterinarian. Or, err on the safe side and give treats made specifically for animals.

- Be sure any rodenticides you use are kept in metal cabinets or high on shelves where your pets can't find them. Remember that dogs can be fatally poisoned by eating an exposed rodent, so always be very cautious about using these products. Tell your neighbors if you put out rat bait, so they can protect their pets from exposure, and ask them to do the same for you.
- When buying plants for your home, opt for those that won't cause problems if your dog happens to nibble on them. The ASPCA has an online list of toxic and nontoxic plants by species. If you choose to have toxic plants, be sure they are kept in a place where your animals can't reach them.
- Store all chemicals and cleaners in pet-inaccessible areas of your home.

WebMD Veterinary Reference

Reviewed by **Amy Flowers, DVM** on May 05, 2019

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SOURCES ▼

SOURCES: American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals web site: "Top 10 Pet Poisons of 2012," "Top 10 Human Medications That Poison Our Pets," "People Foods to Avoid Feeding Your Pets," "17 Common Poisonous Plants," and "What To Do If Your Pet Is Poisoned." American Animal Hospital Association web site. Healthypet.com: "Chocolate is dangerous for pets" and "Flea control products." American Veterinary Medical Association: "A Pet Owners Guide to Poisons."