

March is National Poison Control Awareness Month



March is National Poison Control Month. A perfect time to educate your clients about the dangers in their home and neighborhood and what to do if they are in danger. The document contains helpful information shared from ASPCA and the PetPoisonHelpline. In addition there are a number of ideas of what can do in your clinic today.

Here are just a few things you can do in your clinic:

- Post poison information on your website year-around with important phone numbers for quick reference.
- Provide phone numbers (including your clinic) in all *New Patient Packets*. (note, don't give packets to just new puppies and kittens, but for ALL new clients and patients)
- Offer magnets with your phone number and important reference numbers including Poison Control.
- Post educational information on your Facebook pages and in your newsletters.
- Partner with a vendor and host an 'Open House' in March to share information. This is great for boy and girl scout troupes, 4-H clubs, church and schools.
- Consider a scavenger hunt and find all of the things in your home harmful to your pet. A fun way to educate your clients and offer prizes.
- Hold a contest – post questions on your Facebook page and ask, "which of the following are bad for you pet?"
- Offer decals for pet owners to label items in special containers as give-aways or for sale to store harmful items (don't forget to put your logo or a decal with phone numbers).

- Work with a local garden center and host a workshop. Most garden centers are popular places for pet owners to take their pets but have a number of plants that can be dangerous to pets. Provide decals/signs and include your name, "signs courtesy of ABC Pet Clinic"



**BAD PLANTS
For Pets**



There are a number of opportunities year-around to educate your clients when any event is tied to poisons such as:

- Parties where dangerous Human Food is served (New Year, SuperBowl, Picnics, Halloween, Valentines, Easter, etc)
- Seasons such as Winter (antifreeze and salt) or Spring (spring cleaning or gardening)
- Flu season, where more medications are around the home

Share this information with your clients:

NUMBERS TO KEEP HANDY

ASPCA Poison Control Center (888) 426-4435 (\$65 Consultation Fee may apply)

Pet Poison Helpline 1-800-213-6680 (\$35 Consultation Fee may apply)

Nationwide Standard Human Poison Control Center 1-800-222-1222 (FREE)

Local Veterinarian/Emergency Clinic



All 3 numbers are available 24/7 year round. More than 2 million poisonings are reported each year to the 61 Poison Control Centers (PCCs) across the country. More than 90 percent of these poisonings occur in the home. The majority of non-fatal poisonings occur in children younger than six years old. And, poisonings are one of the leading causes of death among adults.

Register these numbers in:

- Your cell phone directory
- Home and Office phonebook
- A black & white hard copy in your car, kitchen and in the garage. Why in black and white? Electronics fail, batteries die, phones don't like liquids, people forget to plug the phone, etc. If you have a hardcopy you can use any phone at any time and still make the call and color will fade.

What information will I need when I call poison control?

Whether you call your regular, emergency veterinarian or any of the suggested poison control centers always have the following information available:

- the species, breed, age, sex, weight and number of animals involved
- the animal's signs (Animals can't tell us symptoms. Tell them what you notice)
- information regarding the exposure, including the agent (if known),
- the amount of the agent involved
- the time elapsed since the time of exposure.

Have the product container/package available for reference.

Collect in a sealable plastic bag any material your pet may have vomited or chewed.

Use extreme caution when handling some of the chemicals. Wear non-latex gloves if at all possible.

I think my pet has ingested something potentially dangerous, but she seems normal. What should I do first: call the poison control centers or rush it to my local emergency veterinarian?

If you suspect that your pet may have become exposed to a harmful substance, but is not showing signs of illness, stay calm! Contact your local veterinarian or any of the above mentioned Poison Control Centers first. Not all exposure

situations require an immediate trip to the clinic. Remain calm. Pets can sense your agitation and may become excited, which will raise their blood pressure and may contribute to spreading the poison through the bloodstream faster.

What should I do if I think my pet ate something poisonous?

Remain calm and composed. If your animal is having seizures, losing consciousness, is unconscious or is having difficulty breathing, telephone ahead and bring your pet immediately to your local veterinarian or emergency veterinary clinic. If necessary, he or she may call the Poison Control Center. Bring the suspected substance with you.

Top 10 Pet Poisons

- Human Medications
- Insecticides
- People Food
- Plants
- Veterinary Medicines in excessive doses
- Rodenticides (rat poison)
- Household Cleaners
- Heavy Metals
- Chemical Hazards



Top Ten Human Medications That Poison Pets

- Nsaids (non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs) such as ibuprofen and naproxen
- Antidepressants
- Acetaminophen (especially in cats)
- Methylphenidate for ADHD
- Fluorouracil (an anti-cancer drug)
- Isoniazid (for tuberculosis)
- Pseudoephedrine (found in many cold medicines)
- Anti-diabetic drugs
- Vitamin D derivatives (Calcitriol, Calcipotriene)
- Baclofen (muscle relaxant)



Insecticides

Always read the label directions on insecticides and yard sprays to determine when it is safe for a pet to come in contact with it. Check topical flea and tick products for species information and directions on proper application. Some are safe for both cats and dogs while others are safe for dogs only. At Barnyard Veterinary Service & Supply, we carry Frontline which is effective against fleas, ticks, and lice and is safe for both dogs and cats. However it is not safe for rabbits.

People Foods

- Grapes/Raisins
- Avocados
- Xylitol (sugar substitute often found in gum)
- Chocolate (especially dark or baker's chocolate)
- Alcohol
- Coffee
- Fatty or salty foods



Yeast dough
Moldy or spoiled foods
Macadamia nuts
Onions/Garlic

Plants

Peace Lily, Amaryllis, Castor Bean, Oleander, Autumn crocus, Chrysanthemums (Mums), Azalea, Rhododendron, Sago Palm, Lilies, Kalanchoe, Schefflera, Cyclamen, English Ivy, Yew, Marijuana, Pothos, Tulip and Daffodil bulbs (dogs love to dig up bulbs planted with bonemeal)

Veterinary Medicines

- Prescription medications given to your pet may be toxic in too high of a dose. Follow label directions carefully.

Rodenticides (Rat poison)

- May be addicting to pets and toxicity gets worse with repeat ingestion.

Household Cleaners

- Keep bleach and ammonia containing products out of your pet's roaming area. We've seen some severe gastroenteritis cases due to pets drinking mop water with bleach in it or from drinking out of toilet bowls treated with those constant release bleach tablets.

Heavy Metals

- Lead, zinc, mercury, etc. from old paint, household siding and construction debris, old lead shotgun shot, pennies, etc.

Chemical Hazards

- Anti-freeze is one of the most common chemical intoxicants. It is sweet tasting so cats and dogs are attracted to it. Animals only need to ingest a small amount (a few teaspoons to tablespoons) of anti-freeze for it to cause severe kidney damage and death.

Additional Resources:

PetEducation.com – First Aid for ingestion of toxic products by pets.

American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) Household Hazards

ASPCA Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/aspcaapcc>

Veterinary Education Network provides quality continuing education for the veterinary world. Visit us online and see our library filled with a variety of ideas to market your brand and educate your clients.



