

Poisonous Items Found Around the House

Although we might consider a piece of candy to be a treat, that candy might be poisonous to an animal. Many items found around the house can harbor toxins that are dangerous to pets. While some items can cause mild or temporary discomfort, others can cause more severe problems, including death.

The following is a list of common items found around the house that might be dangerous to your pet. This is not a complete list of everything that can be toxic to your animal. If you suspect poisoning, contact the Veterinary Teaching Hospital at (970) 297-5000 or your primary veterinarian immediately.



Alcoholic Beverages: Any type of alcohol can be dangerous to a pet. The dangers range from intoxication, a coma, and even death. Beer can be especially harmful because of the hops, which can specifically cause panting, elevated temperature, increased heart rate, seizures and, in extreme cases, death.

Apple Seeds: The flesh of ripe apples doesn't pose a problem for pets. However, apple stems, leaves and seeds contain cyanide, which can cause vomiting, diarrhea, a lack of oxygen in the blood, decreased heart rate, respiratory congestion, seizures, coma, and if large amounts are ingested, can lead to respiratory failure and death.

Apricot, Cherry, Peach, and Plum Pits: All of these fruit pits contain cyanide, like apple seeds, which can cause respiratory difficulties such as breathing, coughing and sneezing, vomiting, diarrhea, a lack of oxygen in the blood (cyanosis), decreased heart rate, respiratory congestion, seizures, and coma. In large enough amounts are ingested it could ultimately lead to respiratory failure and death.



Baby Food: Can contain onion powder, which can be harmful for pets (see below).

Candy or diet products containing the sweetener Xylitol: Can cause liver damage and even death. Xylitol is usually found in sugarless candies or diet products.

Chocolate: Any kind of chocolate can be dangerous, but darker chocolate contains more poisonous qualities than milk chocolate. Symptoms might not show up for 24 hours, and include irregular heart rate, diarrhea, vomiting, panting, muscle tremors, abdominal pain, bloody urine, increased body temperature, seizures, coma and possibly even death.

Cigarettes: Cigarettes and other tobacco products can be dangerous for pets. These products contain nicotine, which has the potential to produce severe vomiting, depression, elevated heart rate, drop in blood pressure, seizures, respiratory failure and, in severe cases, death.

Coffee and Tea: Coffee, or most anything that contains caffeine, stimulates the central nervous and cardiac systems and results in increased breathing and heart rate, restlessness, and potentially dangerous changes in the central nervous system.

Grapes: Grapes and raisins can be poisonous to pets and can cause vomiting, diarrhea, lethargy, abdominal pain, lack of appetite and kidney damage.



Macadamia Nuts: Have been known to cause vomiting, lethargy, hyperthermia, abdominal pain, stiff joints, lameness and tremors, however these symptoms are usually temporary.

Mushrooms: Wild mushrooms can cause symptoms such as depression, diarrhea, nausea and vomiting, abdominal pain, tearing, hallucinations, defecation, liver failure, seizures, drooling, urination, kidney failure, heart damage, hyperactivity and in some cases, death.

Nutmeg: Has been known to cause tremors, seizures and death in large doses.

Onions and Garlic (Raw, Cooked, or Powder): Onions and garlic can destroy red blood cells which can cause anemia, weakness, breathing difficulty and some gastrointestinal problems, such as vomiting and diarrhea.



Potato Leaves and Stems: Potato leaves and stems contain oxalate, which is linked to kidney disease and death. Consuming this can cause problems with the digestive, nervous and urinary systems, especially when the potatoes are raw or contain green spots.

Raisins: Raisins and grapes can be poisonous to pets and can cause vomiting, diarrhea, lethargy, abdominal pain, lack of appetite and kidney damage.

Rhubarb Leaves: Rhubarb leaves contain oxalate, which is linked to kidney disease and death. Pets who consume rhubarb leaves can have problems with the digestive, nervous and urinary systems.



Salt: Although small amounts of salt aren't dangerous to pets, large quantities can cause electrolyte imbalances.

Tomato Leaves and Stems: While ripe tomatoes aren't poisonous for pets, the green parts – the leaves and stems – can cause problems with the digestive, nervous and urinary systems.

Walnuts: Walnuts can cause gastrointestinal problems such as vomiting and diarrhea, as well as respiratory issues such as sneezing, breathing and coughing. It might take days for your pet to show symptoms.

Yeast Dough: Yeast can be dangerous because it might expand after it has been ingested and result in gas, pain and possible rupture of the stomach or intestines.