

Common pet toxins



CHOCOLATE

TOXIN: Theobromine & caffeine
The more cocoa that is in the chocolate, the more toxic it is. Cooking chocolate is seven times more toxic than milk chocolate.

SYMPTOMS: Seen within hours of ingestion – excitability, fast heart rate, tremoring, vomiting, diarrhoea, seizures and death.



YEAST DOUGH

TOXIN: Ethanol – heat causes dough to expand in the stomach and the process produces alcohol.

SYMPTOMS: Include abdominal pain, bloating of the abdomen, difficulty walking, depression, coma and possible death.



ONION & GARLIC

TOXIN: Disulfides
SYMPTOMS: May be seen within 24 hours to several days after ingestion and are due to damage to the red blood cells. Include pale gums, fast heart rate, rapid breathing, depression, weakness, red coloured urine, vomiting and diarrhoea.



CHEWING GUM

TOXIN: Xylitol
SYMPTOMS: Seen within 30 minutes to 12 hours from ingestion. Include vomiting, depression, difficulty standing or walking, seizures and possible liver failure.



MACADAMIA NUTS

TOXIN: Unknown toxic compound
SYMPTOMS: Seen within 12 hours of ingestion. Include weakness, depression, vomiting, tremoring, pain, inability to stand up and pale gum colour.



LILIES

TOXIN: Unknown toxic compound in Liliium and Hemerocallis spp. The entire plant is toxic. Cats are especially susceptible to the toxicity.

SYMPTOMS: Include vomiting (often contains pieces of lily) and signs associated with kidney failure including disinterest in food, depression, vomiting and no urination.



GRAPES, RAISINS, SULTANAS

TOXIN: Unknown toxic compound
SYMPTOMS: Include depression, vomiting, disinterest in food, pain, diarrhoea, increased drinking or urination. Signs are due to kidney failure.



WILD MUSHROOM

TOXIN: Unknown toxic compound
SYMPTOMS: Include depression, abdominal pain, nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea, drooling, increased tear production, poor coordination, inappropriate toileting and collapse. In severe cases, toxicity can lead to liver failure, kidney failure and death.

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PARACETAMOL

TOXIN: Paracetamol – Cats are more sensitive to the medication.

SYMPTOMS: Include blue coloured gums, difficulty breathing and swelling of the face, depression, vomiting, weakness, coma and death.



CIGARETTES

TOXIN: Nicotine

SYMPTOMS: Usually within 15 to 45 minutes of ingestion. Include excitation, fast breathing, drooling, vomiting, diarrhoea, twitching, depression, a fast heart rate, shallow breathing and can progress to collapse, coma and death.



ASPIRIN

TOXIN: Aspirin

SYMPTOMS: Seen within 4 to 6 hours to several days after ingestion. Include depression, vomiting with or without blood, disinterest in food, rapid breathing, weakness, seizures, coma and death. Toxicity may lead to liver and kidney failure.



FLEA PRODUCTS

TOXIN: Various – carbamate, organophosphate, pyrethroids, ivermectin, mibemycin. Cats are especially sensitive to some products; dog products should never be used on a cat.

SYMPTOMS: Include increased tear production, drooling, vomiting, tremors, seizures, weakness, poor coordination, mental alteration, breathing problems and death.



SNAIL PELLETS

TOXIN: Methaldehyde, methiocarb or iron EDTA

SYMPTOMS: Include depression, drooling, poor coordination, vomiting with or without blood, diarrhoea, passing black or bloody stool, rapid heart rate, rapid breathing, muscle tremors, seizures and death. Toxicity may also cause liver failure. Even products claiming to be pet safe can be toxic.



MOTHBALLS

TOXIN: Naphthalene

SYMPTOMS: Include vomiting, pale gums, fast heart rate, rapid breathing, depression, weakness, red coloured urine and seizures. Severe toxicity can cause liver and kidney failure.



RAT POISON

TOXIN: Various – most commonly brodifacoums, bromadiolones, diphacinones, diphenadiones, chlorphacinones, valones, pidones, warfarin and coumatrin.

SYMPTOMS: Seen 1 to 7 days after ingestion. Include lack of interest in food, coughing, depression, weakness, pale gums, black tarry stool, a bloody nose, vomiting blood, urinating blood, bleeding from the gums, breathing difficulty, lameness or excessive bleeding from wounds.



COOLANT/ANTI-FREEZE

TOXIN: Ethylene Glycol

SYMPTOMS: Seen 30 minutes to 3 days after ingestion. Include nausea, vomiting, depression, poor coordination, seizures, diarrhoea, dehydration, coma and death. Symptoms are due to kidney failure.