

# The Bark & Mew

Information & Updates from Falconbridge Animal Hospital & Village  
Veterinary Hospital

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## March is AVMA Poison Prevention Awareness Month!

Many medications, foods, plants, and household products that are safe for humans can be toxic to pets. Poison Prevention Awareness Month aims to remind pet owners just how careful they need to be to keep their pets healthy and safe!



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### Medications

While human medications may sometimes be prescribed for your pet, dosages are rarely the same or similar, and some common medications that are perfectly safe in humans are toxic to pets. Never give your pet any medication unless it was specifically prescribed or recommended by your vet. The following medications are particularly worth noting:

- **Acetaminophen:** this common painkiller is found in medications like **Tylenol**, **Excedrin**, and others, and is toxic to both dogs and cats. It causes methemoglobinemia, which decreases the ability of blood to carry oxygen to tissue. Symptoms of toxicity may include lethargy, inappetence, vomiting, change in gum color, trouble breathing, and “walking drunk”.
- **Non-Steroidal Anti-Inflammatory Drug (NSAID):** though your vet may prescribe a veterinary NSAID (like Rimadyl), never give your pet human NSAIDs like **Advil**, **Aleve**, and **Motrin**. They can cause stomach and intestinal ulcers as well as kidney failure. While veterinary NSAIDs are safer, they can cause similar problems if ingested in large amounts, so be sure to keep your pet’s prescribed NSAIDs well out of reach. Signs of toxicity may include abnormal heart rate, excessive thirst and urination,

and more.

- **Topical Medications:** although some human topical medications for skin cuts and itchiness (such as **Benedryl** and **Neosporin**) are safe to use on your pet’s skin, beware that ingestion of these medications could cause your pet to feel sick. Watch for signs and symptoms of gastrointestinal upset such as, vomiting or diarrhea. Also, if you find that your pet constantly licks an area that you have applied an ointment, try an E-collar to prevent this.
- **Vitamins and minerals:** while you may think these are relatively safe for your pet, many supplements are toxic when consumed in high doses (and a high dose for a cat or dog can sometimes be a small amount for a human). Some particularly dangerous supplements include **vitamin D**, **calcium**, and **iron**. Inactive ingredients in human supplements can also be dangerous to pets, such as **xylitol**, a component often found in sugar-free gummy vitamins.



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### Foods

Most of us know that foods like chocolate and alcohol are harmful to pets, but there are many less well-known foods that your pet should never consume.

- **Alcohol:** our pets are very sensitive to alcohol; only a small amount is needed to cause a wide range of problems. Common reactions to alcohol in pets include: seizures,

respiratory difficulty, and comatose. These are caused from dramatic decreases in blood pressure, blood sugar, and body temperature. Alcohol can also leave your pet with permanent kidney and liver damage.

- **Chocolate:** you know that chocolate is toxic to dogs and cats, but do you know why? The answer lies in two of its ingredients- **theobromine** and **caffeine**. Different types of chocolate carry different amounts of these ingredients: typically, the darker the chocolate, the more toxic it is. Signs of toxicity include digestive distress, hyperactivity, restlessness, increased heart rate, and excessive thirst. However, severe cases can produce symptoms like seizure, coma, and death.
- **Macadamia Nuts:** these nuts, commonly found in cookies and candies, can cause weakness, tremors, and hyperthermia in dogs if ingested.
- **Onions & garlic:** these foods cause GI upset and can lead to red blood cell damage when ingested in large quantities. They are safe in very small amounts, such as what is found in pet food, but in general these are foods to avoid.
- **Raw meat, eggs, and bones:** raw meat and raw eggs can contain bacteria, such as Salmonella or E. Coli, that can cause our pets to become very ill. Bones can be very dangerous choking hazards. Not only because small pieces may break off, but they can also splinter and become lodged and/or puncture the digestive tract.
- **Salt:** excessive salt intake can cause your pet to drink and urinate more, sometimes even causing sodium ion poisoning. If you think your pet has consumed salty foods, watch out for signs such as: vomiting, diarrhea, depression, tremors, seizures, and elevated body temperature. Sometimes your vet may recommend canned pet foods (like canned green beans) for your pet, so make sure you purchase cans that specifically say “NO SALT ADDED”.
- **Yeast dough:** uncooked yeast dough can rise and cause gas to build up, potentially leading to a rupture of the stomach or intestines.

careful what you give your pets! Many other people foods not listed may seem harmless but can actually cause major problems for your furry friends.



## Plants

Springtime is almost here and that means FLOWERS! We may not think about them, but some plants can cause major problems for our pets.

- **Lilies:** common lilies are especially toxic for cats; even in small amounts, ingestion of lilies can cause severe kidney damage. Peace lilies contain calcium oxalate crystals that cause oral irritation, drooling, vomiting, and problems swallowing for pets who ingest.
- **Tulips:** tulip bulbs contain toxins that can cause serious gastrointestinal upset, drooling, loss of appetite, convulsions, and cardiac problems.
- **Marijuana:** marijuana ingestion can cause incoordination and a decrease in the central nervous system function. Other symptoms may include: vomiting, diarrhea, drooling, increased heart rate, and seizures.
- **English Ivy:** this plant contains toxins that if ingested can cause severe vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain, and excessive drooling.
- **Poinsettias:** this Christmastime favorite can cause some mouth and stomach irritation and can sometimes lead to vomiting, but according to Animal Poison Control they are not fatal.

It's tempting to share tasty snacks with your friends, but be



If you are unsure what your pet has eaten, but you notice something just isn't quite right, look for the most common symptoms that are seen with toxicity like: vomiting, diarrhea, drooling, lethargy, or tremors. For any questions or concerns, call your vet, an emergency vet, or Animal Poison Control for further information.

**ANIMAL POISON CONTROL**

**888-426-4435**