

Liquid Potpourri Dangerous to Dogs

Poison control center warns that oils in products can cause skin irritation and other problems.

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Before setting out a pleasant-smelling potpourri simmer pot, take heed: many liquid potpourris contain oils and detergents that are hazardous to dogs and puppies, according to the ASPCA's Animal Poison Control Center.

The essential oils found in many potpourri products can irritate dogs' skin, gastrointestinal tract and mucous membranes, according to the ASPCA veterinary toxicologist and Senior Vice President Steven Hansen.

More significant injuries are typically a result of thermal burns or exposure to a type of detergent called cationics. "Where there is contact with the skin, redness, swelling and extremely painful lesions can appear," Hansen said.

Symptoms of exposure in dogs include drooling, vomiting, depression, metabolic disturbances and difficulty breathing from fluid in the lungs.

Although 10 percent of the liquid potpourri poisoning cases managed by the ASPCA since 2001 have included life-threatening effects, most animals make a full recovery if treated promptly.

"However, it is important to note that treatment can be very extensive and may involve a lengthy hospitalization," Hansen said.

To avoid exposing your pet to the dangers of liquid potpourri, the Poison Control Center suggests placing potpourri simmer pots and unused liquid in rooms where dogs and other pets can't gain access, and considering using safer alternatives, such as plug-in or solid air fresheners.

If you suspect your dog or puppy has been exposed to liquid potpourri, call a veterinarian or the APCC's emergency hotline at (888) 426-4435.