

## Animal Poison Control Updates Dog Toxin List

**The group, along with the ASPCA, offers tips to keep pets safe from poisoning.**

Posted: Feb. 25, 2008, 5 a.m. EST

In anticipation of National Poison Prevention Week next month, the ASPCA's Animal Poison Control Center (APCC) updated its list of top toxins for pets, based on calls to the group's 24-hour hotline in 2007. The ASPCA also offered tips for pet owners to help keep their dogs safe from harm.

The top toxins in 2007 — and the best ways to prevent your cat or dog from ingesting them — are as follows:

1. Medications. The APCC received 89,000 calls related to pets ingesting medications, including painkillers, cold and flu remedies and antidepressants. Dog owners should never give their pets medication without consulting a veterinarian, and should keep all prescription and over-the-counter medications out of reach, such as in a closed cabinet above a countertop.
2. Insecticides. Flea and tick preparations, insect baits, and spray bug-control products accounted for more than 26,000 calls to the APCC in 2007. Steven Hansen, director of the APCC, recommends that dog owners carefully read label instructions before using any type of insecticide, and notes that some animals can be sensitive to the ingredients found in these products.
3. Plants and Flowers. The APCC received more than 8,000 calls related to household plants, including lilies, azaleas and kalanchoe. Other harmful plants include rhododendron, sago palm, and schefflera. "Also, lilies are highly toxic to cats," Hansen said. "Even in small amounts they can produce life-threatening kidney failure."
4. Rodent Bait. While insecticides pose dangers to cats and dogs, so do baits formulated to kill mice, rats and other rodents. "Some baits contain inactive ingredients meant to attract rodents, which can be attractive to pets as well," Hansen said. "That's why it's so important ... to place the product in areas that are completely inaccessible to companion animals."
5. Cleaning Products. Accidental overexposures to bleaches, detergents, and disinfectants led to 7,200 calls to the APCC in 2007. These products can cause gastrointestinal problems in dogs, and can irritate pets' eyes, skin, and respiratory tracts. "All household cleaners and other chemicals should be stored in a secure location well out of the reach of pets," Hansen said.

The ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center, located in Urbana, Ill., is a 24-hour, 365-day facility staffed by 30 veterinarians, 12 of which are board-certified toxicologists. For more information about the APCC, visit the group's website.