

## 10 Household Items Poisonous to Dogs

**ASPCA's Poison Control Center says many household items can be poisonous to dogs.**

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The ASPCA last week revealed that it managed more than 116,000 calls to its Animal Poison Control Center hotline in 2006, many of which pertained to pet poisonings from common household items.

"While the reason is not clear, calls in virtually each of these categories seems to be on the rise," said Steven Hansen, veterinary toxicologist and senior vice president with the ASPCA, who manages the ASPCA's Midwest Office, which houses the APCC.

During National Poison Prevention Week, from March 18 to 24, the ASPCA is advising pet owners to stay alert to the possibility of poisoning from these common household items:

1. **Human medications:** The ASPCA says this category has been number one on its list of common items hazardous to dogs for years, including in 2006. Last year, more than 78,000 calls involving common human drugs such as painkillers, cold medications, antidepressants and dietary supplements were managed by the poison control center — a 69 percent increase over 2005.
2. **Insecticides:** The APCC handled more than 27,000 pet poisonings pertaining to products used to kill fleas, ticks and other insects in 2006, up more than 28 percent from 2005. "A key factor in the safe use of products that eliminate fleas, ticks and other pesky bugs, is reading and following label instructions exactly," Hansen said.
3. **Veterinary medications:** The APCC says it managed more than 12,000 cases in 2006 involving animal-related preparations such as non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, heartworm preventatives, de-wormers, antibiotics, vaccines and nutritional supplements — a 93 percent hike in volume.
4. **Plants:** The number of pet poisonings involving plants also shot up by more than 111 percent in 2006 to over 9,300. While poisonous plants should certainly be kept away from dogs, it is also a good idea to discourage dogs from nibbling on any variety of plant, as even non-toxic plants can lead to minor stomach upsets.
5. **Rodenticides:** Last year, approximately 8,800 calls about rat and mouse poisons were received by the APCC, representing an increase of more than 27 percent over 2005.
6. **Household cleaners:** In 2006, the APCC received approximately 7,200 calls of pet poisonings pertaining to cleaning agents such as bleaches, detergents and disinfectants.
7. **Chocolate:** Always a common food-related call, more than 4,800 chocolate calls were received by the APCC last year, an 85 percent increase from 2005. Chocolate is poisonous and potentially fatal to dogs. "Typically, the darker the chocolate, the greater the potential for poisoning," Hansen said.
8. **Chemical hazards:** A newcomer to the top 10 pet poisons, this includes such harmful items as volatile petroleum-based products, alcohols, acids and gases. In 2006, the APCC received more than 4,100 calls related to chemical hazards — a jump in call volume of more than 300 percent.
9. **Physical hazards:** While not necessarily all toxic, items in this group include objects that could pose a choking hazard, risk for intestinal obstruction, or other physical injury. In 2006, the number of pet cases related to a physical hazard grew 460 percent to over 3,800.
10. **Home improvement products:** In 2006, about 2,100 cases involving paint, solvents, expanding glues and other products commonly used in construction were managed by the APCC — up 17 percent from 2005.