



DOG CARE



Dog Toxins

Common Toxins in and Around the Home

There are many items around the home which can be dangerous to pets. Common toxins include some foods, laundry powder, cleaning products, pain relief medications (especially Panadol), rodenticides, snail bait and some varieties of plants which may be found in your garden.

- **Onions** cause damage to your dog's red blood cells and result in anaemia. Symptoms of poisoning can include vomiting, weakness and pallor.
- **Grapes & Raisins** can lead to kidney failure in dogs. The reason for this is unclear, as is the amount of grapes or raisins required to cause a problem. For this reason it is better to avoid feeding your dog any grapes or grape products.
- **Macadamia nuts** cause weakness, depression, vomiting, ataxia (loss of balance and coordination), tremors and a high temperature.
- **Chocolate** contains theobromine and caffeine, which are both classified as methylxanthines. Unfortunately, dogs are sensitive to the effects of methylxanthines which can cause hyperactivity, increased heart rate, tremors, and potentially death when ingested at a toxic dose. Other effects seen with chocolate overdose include vomiting, diarrhoea, increased thirst, increased urination, and lethargy. The amount of methylxanthines in chocolate depends on the type; generally dark or bitter chocolate is more toxic and only small amounts need to be ingested to be toxic. As a rule you should not allow your dog to have access to chocolate of any type.
- **Mouldy Foods** can contain certain toxins which affect the nervous system, resulting in muscle tremors, ataxia (loss of balance and coordination) and convulsions which can last for days. Treatment is urgent!
- **Laundry Powder** and other cleaning products like bleach can be caustic and burn pets' mouths, resulting in deep ulcers and burns in the mouth and even down the oesophagus and into the stomach. Most cases will require immediate veterinary attention to minimise pain and infection. Affected animals often have trouble eating but severe cases can result in stomach perforation or ulceration.
- **Pain relief medications** which are meant for human use are not safe for use in animals. Panadol contains a chemical which is not able to be broken down effectively by dogs or cats and even



small doses can be fatal in pets (especially for cats). It is important to make sure your pet cannot get access to human medication. If you are worried that your dog is in pain and needs pain relief, you should see a vet for a diagnosis and the prescription of an appropriate pain relief for use in animals.

- **Rodenticides** (rat/mouse baits) contain components (e.g. warfarin) which inhibit Vitamin K's contribution to blood clotting. This means that ingestion of rodenticides can lead to potentially fatal internal bleeding. Early symptoms can take 3-5 days to occur and usually include bleeding gums and bruising in the skin, especially on the inner thighs and abdomen. Treatment is possible by supplementing your dog's vitamin K intake, but early intervention is needed. All measures should be taken to reduce the risk of your dog being exposed to sources of rodenticides.
- **Snail Bait** contains chemicals which can cause tremors and seizures in animals. Ingestion can be fatal if left untreated and treatment generally involves stomach pumping, enemas and intravenous fluids.
- **Plants:** there are many varieties of plants which can be toxic to dogs if ingested. For example, many varieties of lilies contain a product called oxalate which can cause potentially irreversible damage to the kidneys if left untreated. It is best to avoid planting potentially hazardous plants in your garden, but if your dog eats any of the plants in your garden you should call your local vet to see if they could be harmful to your dog.



If you are worried your dog has accidentally consumed something it shouldn't please contact your local vet or the Animal Aid Veterinary Clinic immediately. If the product has only just been consumed sometimes inducing the dog to vomit may help clear much of the toxic load, but this always depends on what has been eaten and the time since ingestion.