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Top 10 Pet Poison Prevention Tips

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Your Guide to [Veterinary Medicine](#).
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Keep your pet safe by being aware of these common toxins around your house and yard. Pets are unpredictable - prevention is the key to a safe environment for pets (and children).

1. Use products on your pet wisely

Fleas, ticks, other parasites and certain skin conditions often necessitate the use of shampoos and topical treatments. Not following the usage directions is one of the most common causes of pet toxicity. This is definitely a case where more is NOT better! Please read and understand all directions when using shampoos, dips, spot-on treatments, etc. for your pet. Also observe the "after treatment" before letting children be around and handle the pet to reduce unnecessary exposure.

2. Only use products and medications designed for the pet

Do not use dog products (or medications) on cats and vice versa. The dosing is often different, and things that are OK for one species may be quite toxic to another. The same goes for using human medications and topical treatments on pets -- do not do so unless under direct recommendation/advice from your veterinarian.

3. Keep all medications out of reach

Dogs have been known to down large quantities of pre-natal vitamins, ibuprofen, Vitamin C, and so on. It may be curiosity, it may be the taste (many have a [sweet or even chocolate flavored](#) coating). Pet medications may be meat-flavored. Whatever the reason, medication overdose is an emergency. The sooner the better to rid the body of excess toxin. Please call your veterinarian or Animal Poison Control to find the best way to rid or deactivate the toxin (via vomition or activated charcoal).

4. Wash de-icers off of paws

If you walk your pet or use snow and ice melting products, be sure to rinse off your pet's feet well after exposure. These products can be irritating to the skin and paws. Pets will often lick their paws and can ingest the toxin.

5. Limit the use of rodenticide poison (rat poison)

Rat and mice infestation carry their own set of health problems for people and pets, and should be removed from inhabited areas. It is important consider your pet's safety when getting rid of rodents. Rat poison is a *bait* -- this works for rodents as well as pets. Even if the poison is hidden or seemingly out of your pet's reach, determined pets can be quite creative when trying to reach the bait. Additionally, rodents that die from the poison and are ingested by pets post a risk to the pet.

6. Antifreeze and windshield deicer

This is a common toxin and potentially very deadly. Antifreeze (ethylene glycol) is sweet-tasting, and even one lick can be quite toxic to some pets. Clean up all spills and store these items locked away from pets and children. An alternative to regular antifreeze is to use a [safe antifreeze alternative](#) (propylene glycol). The cost may be more, but your pets will be safer in the event of accidental exposure.

7. Poisonous household plants

Many of our favorite plants for home and garden are toxic to eat/chew on. This is not usually a problem with human adults, but pets and children love to explore, chew, and taste! Be familiar with the [types of common poisonous plants](#) and prevent your pet's access to them, just in case!

Additional Resources:

[Guide To poisonous plants](#)

[Guide To poisonous plants](#)

[Poisonous plants](#)

8. Common food and dietary hazards

Never give your pet spoiled or moldy food. Chocolate, grapes, and raisins are also toxic to pets. Avocados are toxic to birds. Coffee, tea and alcoholic beverages should never be offered to pets. Click here for a complete listing of [potentially toxic foods for pets](#).

9. Lawn and garden chemical safety

Just like products applied directly on a pet, it is important to follow the manufacturer's directions and prevent access of the pest/herbicide treated area until it is safe. Pets are lower to the ground with their faces closer to the vegetation, so caution is advised.

10. Secure inside and outside trash cans

This is probably obvious, keeping trash out of pet's reach, but the sheer mix of items in a trash can can make a pet owner forget the combined potential hazard. Meat and food scraps mixed with discarded household cleaner containers... with broken glass or other sharp objects, etc., is a recipe for disaster on many levels! Even "good" pets who usually don't get into the garbage may get an inclination due to what they smell or if they are bored or hungry. Make sure your trash is secure.

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http://vetmedicine.about.com/od/toxicology/tp/TP_poisonprev.htm

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