

Tips for Poisoned Pets

Pet Poison Helpline and ASPCA offer hotlines and advice for pet owners.

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Medications and insecticides are among the most common household items that poison pets. It's a pet owners nightmare: one minute your pet is frolicking happily and the next it is sick from ingesting a poisonous substance in your home. If it were your child, you might know to call a local Poison Control Center right away, but who can help your pet?

There are a number of options for panicking pet owners who need immediate advice.

Pet Poison Helpline is a service staffed 24 hours a day, seven days a week, by veterinarians, board-certified veterinary toxicologists, board-certified internal medicine and emergency critical care specialists and doctors of pharmacy. By calling 800-213-6680, pet owners can talk to an expert for a \$35 per incident fee, which includes follow-up phone consultation for the duration of the poison case.

The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) offers a similar service, which can be reached at 888-426-4435, for a \$60 fee.

The ASPCA notes that it is important that people telephone ahead and bring their pet immediately to a local veterinarian or emergency veterinary clinic instead of calling a poison control hotline if the animal is having seizures, losing consciousness, is unconscious or is having difficulty breathing.

The top 10 pet poisons of 2008, according to the ASPCA, were: people medications; insecticides; people food; rodenticides; veterinary medications; plants; chemical hazards like drain cleaners and pool chemicals; household cleaners; heavy metals which can be ingested or inhaled through lead paint and dust from household scraping and sanding; and fertilizers.