

TEN (10) PET DANGERS YOU MAY NOT KNOW ABOUT

The following is an excerpt from the June, 2007 Good Housekeeping.

Sugar Substitutes. Xylitol- a sweetener used in many sugar-free candies, chewing gums, baked goods and toothpastes – can cause low blood sugar and liver damage in dogs, reports a study published last year in the Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association. The study shows that a 22 pound dog that ingests just a gram of the stuff should be treated by a vet.

Liquid Potpourri. A cat or dog can be badly burned lapping up hot oils and detergents. And many of the liquid potpourri ingredients can breed ulcers in your animals mouth, throat and/or gastrointestinal tract. The ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center has seen 330 such cases since 2001, most involving cats. (Experts think the formulas are also toxic to dogs, but cats appear more sensitive to exposure and are more likely to climb up to reach simmer pots.) About 10 percent of incidents are life threatening.

Medications. No sensible pet owner would leave an open prescription bottle within paw's reach. But beware of closed childproof containers as well: "Animals can crush them". Swallowing prescription pills could kill your pet. So keep your four footed friends away from ALL medication, closed or open.

Lilies. Dogs can get sick from eating azalea or rhododendron, which can lead to vomiting, drooling, diarrhea, weakness, depression of the central nervous system, and, in rare cases, death.

Polyurethane Glue. When swallowed, it goes to the stomach, absorbs moisture, and expands to form a large, rock-like mass. So if your dog's stomach is swollen, take him to a vet.

Onions and Garlic. They contain disulfides, sulfur compounds that can cause gastrointestinal irritation to pets and harm their red blood cells.

Grapes and Raisins. We're not sure why they're toxic to dogs, but they can trigger gastrointestinal problems like vomiting and diarrhea, or, more commonly, kidney failure says Karen Halligan, DVM, director of Veterinary services at the ASPCA of Los Angeles.

Pennies. Pennies are particularly dangerous for a dog to swallow because they're made with zinc, which is toxic to animals. When a penny sits in your pet's stomach, the zinc leaches out into the red blood cells, resulting in severe anemia and kidney problems. The newer the penny, the more likely it is to be deadly. That's because pennies minted after 1982 are 99.2 percent zinc, those minted earlier are only 5 percent.

Macadamia Nuts. Dogs have become dramatically ill from ingesting just a handful of these. The nuts contain an unknown toxin that can upset your pet's digestive tract and muscles, setting off severe weakness (and sometimes paralysis), mild vomiting, and diarrhea. The good news: Virtually all dogs recover within 48 hours of ingestion, whether or not they are treated by a vet.

Pine Oil Cleaners. Scrub your floor with something else – the phenol in these products can cause serious liver damage in cats,. And it doesn't take much for a kitty to be exposed. Your cat might unknowingly lap up a spill or just lick the wet stuff off her feet.