

# Spring Toxins

*With so much snow and cold, many are counting down the days until we see green. As we run outside to greet the sun, don't forget some precautions for our pets.*

**Chemical Spills:** The sweet smell of antifreeze draws pets in. If ingested, spilled antifreeze will cause kidney failure, and treatment must be sought within 3 hours for cats and within 8 hours for dogs. Windshield washer fluid contains ethanol, and similar to alcohol intoxication, causes CNS (central nervous system) depression. Chemicals such as hydraulic brake fluid, agents in condensers, heat exchangers, home solar units, and toilets in RVs contain ethylene glycol that can also be toxic.

**Household Cleaners:** Cleaning products that contain quaternary ammonium compounds (can be seen in Lysol) such as benzalkonium chloride, phenols, and pine oils, are so severe that their use must be avoided in areas where cats are housed. These active ingredients are found in Roccal, Quatricide, A-33, Parvosol, Kennelsol, Mr. Clean, and many others. These compounds must be dried thoroughly before pets are able to lick the wet surfaces or rub on the surface, and groom themselves. Pets who lick these chemicals may develop ulcers of the tongue, throat, and stomach, severe salivation, vomiting, inappetence, weakness, liver and kidney failure.

**Rodenticides:** When moving to a new home or visiting a new area, look for rodent baits and remove them prior to your pet coming in contact with them. You don't generally see symptoms immediately. You may see no signs at all. The anticoagulants found in rodenticides can cause internal bleeding; with signs of coughing, vomiting, nosebleeds, bruised skin, bloody urine, weakness, and bloody gums.

**Pyrethrin or OTC flea treatments:** Flea and tick topical products containing permethrin intended for dogs should not be applied to cats. Early signs of vomiting, increased salivation, falling over, tremors and seizures are witnessed. If not treated, the seizures can increase and be fatal. Take the time to read the manufacturer's product label and warnings.

**Lawn Chemicals:** Lawn fertilizers can cause toxicity through ingestion or skin exposure. Toxicity can lead to vomiting and diarrhea, or in severe cases, dogs may become reluctant to move, become weak, exhibit continuous contraction of muscle fibers, and falling over. Chemicals used to control crabgrass, show similar side effects. Additionally, fertilizer commonly used to protect roses is so toxic that as little as 1 teaspoon is able to kill a 55lb dog.

**Snail and Slug Bait:** Comes in a variety of forms, containing Metaldehyde. This is a common cause of fatal poisonings in pets. They must seek treatment within 1-2 hours, before signs of salivation, vomiting, incoordination, tremors, and seizures.

**Compost Bins:** We applaud you for composting, but be sure to do it toxin-free. It should be fenced off, so pets and wildlife can't get to it. It should not contain dairy or meat products. These piles contain decaying and molding food products, which could have mycotoxins.

**Mushrooms:** 10 groups of toxins have been identified in mushrooms. Symptoms depend on the species of mushroom ingested, and your pet's individual susceptibility. Early signs are vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain, falling over, tremors, seizures, and liver failure. Be safe, clear your yard ahead of time, and rid any growing mushrooms.

**Plants:** There are more toxic plants than room to list. Animal poison control centers and veterinarians have lists of toxic plants available. Even plants considered nontoxic may still result in vomiting and GI disorders when ingested. All types of lilies are toxic to cats, causing vomiting, lethargy, and eventually kidney damage. Rhododendron, Azalea, Laurel, Yews, and Autumn Crocuses are all causes of weakness, seizures, heart arrhythmias, and even collapse.

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References: <https://www.cliniciansbrief.com/article/heatstroke-dogs>, [http://www.animalbehaviorassociates.com/dog\\_park\\_etiquette.htm](http://www.animalbehaviorassociates.com/dog_park_etiquette.htm), <http://www.aspc.org/apcc>, [www.napcc.aspc.org](http://www.napcc.aspc.org) <http://ace.orst.edu/cgi-bin/mfs/01/pips/24-D.htm>, <http://www.vin.com/members/cms/project/deaultadv1.aspx?id=4951982&pid=19239&catid=&said=1&publicpath> [www.aspc.org](http://www.aspc.org), <https://www.cpsc.gov/PageFiles/84838/frpetdis.pdf>

