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POISON PROOF YOUR HOME

THE BEST WAY TO PREVENT ACCIDENTAL POISONING OF YOUR PET IS TO KNOW WHICH SUBSTANCES ARE TOXIC TO YOUR PET AND THEN TAKE PRECAUTIONS TO KEEP THESE SUBSTANCES OUT OF YOUR PET'S REACH. PETS ARE LIKE TODDLERS THAT CAN OPEN ANY CHILD-PROOF CONTAINER AND FIGURE OUT WAYS INTO TROUBLE THAT YOU MAY NEVER HAVE ENVISIONED. IN ADDITION TO GETTING POISONED BY THINGS THAT THEY GET INTO, THERE ARE A NUMBER OF CASES OF PET POISONING THAT OCCURS WHEN OWNERS INTENTIONALLY GIVE THEIR PET SOMETHING IN AN ATTEMPT TO HELP THEM. IN ORDER TO MINIMIZE THE RISK OF YOUR PET GETTING POISONED, THE FOLLOWING PRECAUTIONS ARE RECOMMENDED:

- KEEP PRODUCTS SUCH AS MEDICATIONS, HARMFUL FOODS AND CLEANING PRODUCTS IN A SECURE CABINET ABOVE COUNTERTOP HEIGHT.
- USE A KITCHEN GARBAGE CAN WITH A LID.
- ALWAYS READ LABELS, ESPECIALLY ON FLEA AND TICK PRODUCTS AND ON LAWN AND GARDEN PRODUCTS. STORE OUT OF REACH IN A HIGH CUPBOARD, NOT UNDER THE SINK.
- BE FAMILIAR WITH THE PLANTS IN AND AROUND YOUR HOME AND HAVE ONLY NONTOXIC PLANTS. THE ASPCA WEBSITE (WWW.ASPCA.ORG) HAS A COMPREHENSIVE LIST OF TOXIC PLANTS.
- NEVER GIVE ANY MEDICATION OR SUPPLEMENT TO YOUR PET UNLESS RECOMMENDED OR APPROVED BY YOUR VETERINARIAN.

IF YOU SUSPECT THAT YOUR PET HAS INGESTED A TOXIC SUBSTANCE, **DO NOT PANIC!** IF YOUR PET IS NOT SHOWING ANY SERIOUS SIGNS, NOTE THE AMOUNT INGESTED, SAVE ANY RELATED PACKAGING AND CONTACT OUR OFFICE AND/OR THE ASPCA POISON CONTROL CENTER (1-888-426-4435) IMMEDIATELY TO DETERMINE IF YOUR PET NEEDS TO BE EXAMINED AND TREATED. IF YOUR PET IS SHOWING SERIOUS SIGNS SUCH AS DIFFICULTY BREATHING, SEIZURES, PROFUSE BLEEDING OR UNCONSCIOUSNESS, BRING YOUR PET AS WELL AS ANY PACKAGING OR MATERIAL RELATED TO THE INGESTED SUBSTANCE TO OUR OFFICE (OR EMERGENCY ROOM) IMMEDIATELY.

FOODS TO AVOID FEEDING TO YOUR PET: THERE ARE MANY FOODS THAT SOUND DELICIOUS TO US BUT ARE ACTUALLY QUITE DANGEROUS TO OUR PETS. THE FOLLOWING IS A LIST OF TOXIC HUMAN FOOD TO AVOID FEEDING TO YOUR PET. IF YOU SUSPECT THAT YOUR PET HAS EATEN ANY OF THE FOLLOWING FOODS, PLEASE NOTE THE AMOUNT INGESTED AND CONTACT OUR OFFICE IMMEDIATELY.

CHOCOLATE, COFFEE, CAFFEINE

THE ABOVE ALL CONTAIN SUBSTANCES CALLED METHYLXANTHINES. METHYLXANTHINES, WHEN INGESTED BY PETS, CAN CAUSE VOMITING AND DIARRHEA, PANTING, EXCESSIVE THIRST AND URINATION, HYPERACTIVITY, ABNORMAL HEART RHYTHM, TREMORS, SEIZURES AND DEATH. NOTE THAT DARKER CHOCOLATE IS MORE DANGEROUS THAN MILK CHOCOLATE. WHITE CHOCOLATE HAS THE LOWEST LEVEL OF METHYLXANTHINES AND BAKING CHOCOLATE CONTAINS THE HIGHEST LEVEL OF METHYLXANTHINES.

ALCOHOL

BEVERAGES AND FOOD PRODUCTS THAT CONTAIN ALCOHOL CAN CAUSE VOMITING AND DIARRHEA, CENTRAL NERVOUS SYSTEM DEPRESSION, DECREASED COORDINATION, TREMORS, DIFFICULTY BREATHING, COMA AND DEATH.

AVOCADO

THE AVOCADO FRUIT, SEED AND PLANT CONTAINS A SUBSTANCE CALLED PERSIN WHICH CAN CAUSE VOMITING AND DIARRHEA WHEN INGESTED BY DOGS. BIRDS AND RODENTS ARE ESPECIALLY SENSITIVE TO AVOCADOS AND CAN DEVELOP DIFFICULTY BREATHING AND ACCUMULATION OF FLUID AROUND THE HEART. AVOCADO INGESTION CAN SOMETIMES BE FATAL.

MACADAMIA NUTS

WHEN INGESTED BY DOGS, MACADAMIA NUTS CAN CAUSE WEAKNESS, INCOORDINATION, DEPRESSION, VOMITING, TREMORS AND FEVERS. THE CLINICAL SIGNS USUALLY OCCUR WITHIN 12 HOURS OF INGESTION AND CAN LAST UP TO 48 HOURS.

GRAPES & RAISINS

GRAPES AND RAISINS CAN CAUSE KIDNEY FAILURE IN PETS. THE EXACT MECHANISM IS CURRENTLY UNKNOWN. SIGNS OF KIDNEY FAILURE CAN INCLUDE EXCESSIVE THIRST AND URINATION, VOMITING, LOSS OF APPETITE AND LETHARGY.

YEAST DOUGH

WHEN YOUR PET INGESTS YEAST DOUGH, THE DOUGH RISES AND CAUSES GAS TO ACCUMULATE IN THE GASTROINTESTINAL SYSTEM. THIS IS A VERY PAINFUL CONDITION THAT CAN LEAD TO THE RUPTURE OF THE STOMACH OR INTESTINES. THIS RISK DIMINISHES WHEN THE DOUGH IS COOKED AND THE YEAST HAS FULLY RISEN.

XYLITOL

XYLITOL IS A SUBSTANCE THAT IS USED AS A SWEETENER IN GUM, CANDY, BAKED GOODS AND TOOTHPASTE. XYLITOL CAUSES INSULIN RELEASE WHICH LEADS TO LOW BLOOD SUGAR LEVELS AND ULTIMATELY LIVER FAILURE. INITIAL CLINICAL SIGNS INCLUDE VOMITING, LOSS OF COORDINATION AND LETHARGY. THESE SIGNS CAN PROGRESS TO RECUMBENCY AND SEIZURES. LIVER FAILURE CAN OCCUR WITHIN A FEW DAYS.

ONIONS, GARLIC, CHIVES

ONIONS, GARLIC AND CHIVES CAN CAUSE GASTROINTESTINAL IRRITATION AND MORE IMPORTANTLY, THEY CAN CAUSE DAMAGE TO RED BLOOD CELLS THAT CAN LEAD TO LIFE THREATENING ANEMIA. CATS ARE MORE SUSCEPTIBLE THAN DOGS, HOWEVER, DOGS ARE AT RISK OF TOXICITY IF A LARGE ENOUGH AMOUNT IS CONSUMED. CLINICAL SIGNS OF TOXICITY CAN INCLUDE VOMITING, LETHARGY, WEAKNESS, LOSS OF APPETITE AND PALE MUCOUS MEMBRANES (GUMS).

RAW/UNDERCOOKED MEAT, EGGS AND BONES

RAW MEAT AND EGGS CONTAIN BACTERIA SUCH AS *SALMONELLA* AND *E.COLI* AND PARASITES SUCH AS *TRICHINELLA* AND *SARCOCYSTIS*. THESE ORGANISMS ARE NOT ONLY POTENTIALLY HARMFUL TO YOUR PET BUT ALSO TO HUMANS. STUDIES HAVE SHOWN THAT ANIMALS THAT ARE NOT SICK THEMSELVES CAN POSE A PUBLIC HEALTH CONCERN DUE TO SHEDDING OF BACTERIA OR LARVAE INTO THE ENVIRONMENT. IN ADDITION, RAW EGGS CONTAIN *AVIDIN* WHICH IS AN ENZYME THAT DECREASES THE ABSORPTION OF BIOTIN (B VITAMIN). RAW BONES CAN BE DANGEROUS TO A PET DUE TO THE POTENTIAL FOR THE BONE TO SPLINTER AND EITHER BECOME LODGED IN OR PUNCTURE YOUR PET'S GASTROINTESTINAL TRACT.

MOLDY OR SPOILED FOOD

SPOILED OR MOLDY FOOD CONTAINS MYCOTOXINS WHICH ARE TOXINS THAT ARE PRODUCED BY FUNGI AND MOLD. *AFLATOXIN* IS A COMMON MYCOTOXIN THAT CAN ATTACK THE LIVER AND CAUSE LIFE-THREATENING HEPATITIS AS WELL AS GASTROINTESTINAL SIGNS. *AFLATOXIN* IS PRODUCED BY A FUNGUS CALLED *ASPERGILLUS* WHICH IS THE WHITE AND GRAY FLUFFY MOLD COMMONLY SEEN ON SPOILED FOOD. IT IS IMPORTANT TO NOTE THAT COOKING DOES NOT DESTROY THE FUNGUS.

MEDICATION HAZARDS: HUMAN MEDICATIONS ARE USUALLY THE MOST COMMON CAUSE OF PET POISONING. MOST OFTEN, THE INGESTION IS ACCIDENTAL; HOWEVER, THESE TOXICITIES ALSO OCCUR WHEN OWNERS UNWITTINGLY GIVE A HUMAN MEDICATION THAT IS TOXIC TO THEIR PET IN AN ATTEMPT TO HELP THEIR PET. IN ADDITION, MANY MEDICATIONS THAT ARE MADE FOR OUR PETS ARE FLAVORED SO THAT IT IS EASIER TO GIVE TO THEM. UNFORTUNATELY, PETS MAY INGEST AN ENTIRE BOTTLE OF MEDICATION IF THEY LIKE THE TASTE. IT IS IMPORTANT TO CONTACT OUR OFFICE IMMEDIATELY IF YOUR PET INGESTS HUMAN MEDICATION OR MORE THAN WHAT IS PRESCRIBED OF THEIR OWN MEDICATION. THE FOLLOWING LISTS ADDITIONAL PRECAUTIONS:

- KEEP ALL PRESCRIPTIONS AND OVER-THE-COUNTER MEDICATIONS INACCESSIBLE TO PETS.

- PAIN KILLERS, COLD MEDICINES, ANTI-CANCER DRUGS, ANTIDEPRESSANTS, VITAMINS AND DIET PILLS ARE COMMON EXAMPLES OF HUMAN MEDICATION THAT CAN BE POTENTIALLY LETHAL TO PETS.
- ONE REGULAR STRENGTH IBUPROFEN TABLET (200MG) CAN CAUSE STOMACH ULCERS IN A 10 POUND DOG.
- ONE REGULAR STRENGTH ADULT TYLENOL® TABLET CAN KILL A CAT.
- **NEVER** GIVE YOUR PET A MEDICATION OR SUPPLEMENT THAT WAS NOT PRESCRIBED FOR YOUR PET WITHOUT CONTACTING US FIRST SO THAT THE DOCTOR CAN ADVISE YOU ABOUT POTENTIAL RISKS FOR YOUR PET.

HOUSEHOLD TOXINS: CLEANING SUPPLIES, SUCH AS BLEACH, ACIDS, ALKALIS AND OTHER DETERGENTS, CAN CAUSE CORROSIVE INJURY TO THE MOUTH AND STOMACH. OTHER HOUSEHOLD ITEMS SUCH AS BATTERIES AND LIQUID POTPOURRI CAN CAUSE SIMILAR PROBLEMS. ALWAYS KEEP THESE TOXINS BEHIND SECURELY LOCKED DOORS.

PLANTS: BOTH HOUSE PLANTS AND OUTDOOR PLANTS CAN BE INGESTED BY OUR PETS. LILIES CAN CAUSE LIFE-THREATENING KIDNEY FAILURE IN CATS, WHILE SAGO PALMS CAN CAUSE LIVER FAILURE IN DOGS AND CATS. KEEP HOUSE PLANTS AND BOUQUETS AWAY FROM YOUR PETS. THE ASPCA WEBSITE ([WWW.ASPCA.ORG](http://www.aspc.org)) HAS A COMPREHENSIVE LIST OF TOXIC AND NONTOXIC PLANTS.

INSECTICIDES, RODENTICIDES, HERBICIDES AND PESTICIDES: INSECTICIDES ARE COMMONLY USED AROUND OUR HOMES TO CONTROL UNWANTED BUGS. INSECTICIDES ARE ALSO COMMONLY USED ON OUR PETS FOR FLEA AND TICK CONTROL. THE MOST SERIOUS INSECTICIDE TOXICITIES OCCUR WHEN PRODUCTS THAT ARE NOT LABELED FOR USE ON CATS ARE APPLIED TO CATS. ALSO BE AWARE THAT CERTAIN PESTICIDES USED IN FLY, SLUG AND SNAIL BAIT CONTAIN CHEMICALS THAT ARE DANGEROUS TO YOUR PET. BAITS THAT ARE USED TO KILL RODENTS ARE GRAIN BASED AND NOT ONLY ATTRACT MICE AND RATS, BUT ALSO ATTRACT DOGS AND CATS. THERE ARE SEVERAL DIFFERENT TYPES OF RODENTICIDES THAT CAN CAUSE SEIZURES, INTERNAL BLEEDING, KIDNEY FAILURE AND EVEN DEATH. JUST AS THE TASTE OF RODENTICIDES MAY ENTICE OUR PETS TO INGEST THEM, MANY HERBICIDES HAVE A SALTY TASTE AND PETS WILL COMMONLY INGEST THEM. TO MINIMIZE RISK OF EXPOSURE OF YOUR PET TO THESE TOXINS, TAKE THE FOLLOWING PRECAUTIONS:

- ALWAYS FOLLOW LABEL DIRECTIONS.
- ALWAYS MAKE SURE THESE ITEMS ARE PLACED IN AREAS THAT PETS CANNOT ACCESS.
- KEEP PETS AWAY FROM TREATED AREAS FOR THE LABEL RECOMMENDED AMOUNT OF TIME.
- STORE UNUSED PRODUCTS IN AREAS THAT WILL ALWAYS BE INACCESSIBLE TO PETS.

OUTDOOR TOXINS: DEPENDING ON THE SEASON, THERE ARE ALSO MANY HAZARDOUS MATERIALS THAT YOUR PET CAN FIND OUTDOORS. IN THE WARMER MONTHS, THIS MAY INCLUDE

- BLUE-GREEN ALGAE
- ANIMAL TOXINS – TOADS, SNAKES, SPIDERS, INSECTS, LIZARDS
- CITRONELLA CANDLES
- COCOA MULCH
- COMPOST PILES
- FERTILIZERS
- SWIMMING POOL TREATMENT SUPPLIES

IN THE COOLER WEATHER, ANTIFREEZE AND ICE MELTING PRODUCTS ARE PARTICULARLY DANGEROUS TO YOUR PET. ANTIFREEZE HAS A PLEASANT TASTE AND UNFORTUNATELY, ONLY A SMALL AMOUNT CAN BE LETHAL; 1 TEASPOON CAN KILL A CAT AND 4 TEASPOONS IS ENOUGH TO KILL A 10 POUND DOG. ICE MELTING PRODUCTS CAN BE IRRITATING TO YOUR PET'S SKIN AND MOUTH. DEPENDING ON THE ACTIVE INGREDIENT IN THE ICE MELT, CLINICAL SIGNS CAN INCLUDE EXCESSIVE SALIVATING, VOMITING, DEPRESSION AND ELECTROLYTE IMBALANCES. KEEP THESE PRODUCTS OUT OF YOUR PET'S REACH IN A SECURELY LOCKED SHED OR ON HIGH SHELVES WHERE YOUR PET CANNOT GET TO THEM.

KEEPING YOUR PET SAFE DURING THE HOLIDAY SEASON: THE HOLIDAY SEASON IS A TIME TO DECORATE AND CELEBRATE WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS, BOTH TWO-LEGGED AND FOUR-LEGGED. HOWEVER, MANY OF THE FOODS AND DECORATIONS THAT ARE HARMLESS TO HUMANS CAN POSE A SERIOUS HEALTH RISK FOR YOUR PETS. THE FOLLOWING HELPFUL HINTS ARE OFFERED TO ENSURE A HAPPY AND SAFE HOLIDAY SEASON FOR YOUR PET:

- **YOUR PETS ARE NOT GARBAGE DISPOSALS FOR HOLIDAY LEFTOVERS:** TURKEY BONES CAN SPLINTER AND CAUSE OBSTRUCTION. SUDDEN CHANGE IN DIET AND FATTY FOODS CAN LEAD TO VOMITING, DIARRHEA OR PANCREATITIS (POTENTIALLY LIFE THREATENING INFLAMMATION OF THE PANCREAS). AS MENTIONED ABOVE, CERTAIN FOODS CAN BE TOXIC INCLUDING CHOCOLATE, ONIONS OR ONION POWDER, GRAPES AND RAISINS, MACADAMIA NUTS, COFFEE, GARLIC, SALT, YEAST DOUGH, ALCOHOLIC FOOD AND BEVERAGES AND MOLDY OR SPOILED FOOD.
- **CROWDS AND HOLIDAY FESTIVITIES CAN FRIGHTEN SOME PETS:** SET ASIDE A SAFE AND QUIET HAVEN FOR YOUR PET IF NECESSARY. ANY DISRUPTION OF THE HOME, SUCH AS REARRANGING THE FURNITURE, MAY CAUSE YOUR CAT TO STOP USING THE LITTER BOX.
- **BE CAREFUL WITH HOLIDAY DECORATIONS:** SOME COMMON YULETIDE PLANTS SUCH AS POINSETTIAS, IVY, MISTLETOE AND HOLLY BERRIES CAN BE TOXIC TO YOUR PET. PUT CANDLES IN PLACES WHERE YOUR PET CAN'T REACH THEM TO AVOID BURNING OF YOUR PET AND YOUR HOME. ELECTRICAL CORDS CAN ELECTROCUTE YOUR PET IF HE/SHE CHEWS ON THEM. TAPE DOWN AND HIDE LOOSE WIRES TO PREVENT YOUR PET FROM CHEWING ON THEM. REMOVE BOWS, RIBBONS AND YARN FROM DISCARDED WRAPPING PAPER AND CUT AWAY HANDLES FROM SHOPPING AND GIFT BAGS. ALSO, KEEP ALUMINUM FOIL AWAY FROM YOUR PET. IF YOUR PET INGESTS THESE ITEMS, THEY CAN CAUSE CHOKING, VOMITING AND POSSIBLY INTESTINAL OBSTRUCTION. THIS IS A VERY COMMON PROBLEM FOR CATS AND KITTENS.
- **OH TANNENBAUM! MAKE YOUR CHRISTMAS TREE PET FRIENDLY:** CATS LOVE TO CLIMB TREES! POSITION YOUR TREE ON A WIDE, FLAT AND STABLE BASE AND ANCHOR THE TREE TO A NEARBY WALL OR WINDOW. IN ADDITION, DECORATE WITH ANIMAL SAFE ITEMS, ESPECIALLY AT THE BOTTOM OF THE TREE. TINSEL, RIBBONS AND POPCORN STRANDS CAN POTENTIALLY CAUSE FATAL INTESTINAL OBSTRUCTION IF SWALLOWED. BROKEN GLASS ORNAMENTS CAN CUT YOUR PET'S MOUTH AND GASTROINTESTINAL TRACT. ALSO KEEP IN MIND THAT CHRISTMAS TREE WATER MAY CONTAIN FERTILIZERS AND THAT STAGNANT TREE WATER IS A FERTILE BREEDING GROUND FOR BACTERIA. IF INGESTED, YOUR PET MAY DEVELOP VOMITING OR DIARRHEA. MAKE SURE THAT THE BOTTOM OF THE TREE IS COVERED.

REMEMBER, IF YOU THINK THAT YOUR PET HAS INGESTED OR HAS BEEN OTHERWISE EXPOSED TO A TOXIN, DO NOT PANIC! NOTE THE AMOUNT INGESTED, SAVE ANY RELATED PACKAGING AND CONTACT OUR OFFICE AT (845) 638-3600.

ANIMAL POISON CONTROL- ASPCA

888-426-4435

24 HOUR Emergency Veterinary Poison Hotline