



Contact: Nicole Martin
Marketing Manager, AVECCC
nicole.martin@azervets.com
480-497-0222

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AVECCC Asks Owners to Remember Pets During Poison Prevention Week *National Poison Prevention Week: March 15th-20th*

Gilbert, AZ: National Poison Prevention week has been in the third week of March for over 50 years. While it is a nationally recognized effort geared towards raising awareness of potential poisons in the homes of parents with small children, Arizona Veterinary Emergency & Critical Care Center wants to remind those with pets that they, too, are vulnerable to accidental ingestion of potentially life-threatening things in and around the home.

“Pets are naturally curious and often want to smell, taste, and swallow foods, plants and other items in homes that could be dangerous,” said Dr. Brandi Mattison, AVECCC Medical Director. “Poison-proofing your home is an important step towards accidental poisoning. Simple steps, such as making sure your houseplants are non-toxic and storing medications securely, will reduce the possibility that your pets will encounter toxic substances.”

The following are common items found within and around the home that are toxic to pets:

- **Human Foods:** Watch out for foods that are poisonous to dogs and cats - raisins, grapes, macadamia nuts, onions, garlic, unbaked yeast bread dough, fatty foods, chocolate, xylitol, and alcohol all have the potential to poison your pets.
- **Human Medications/Supplements:** OTC or prescription medications, such as Tylenol or antidepressants, can cause serious harm to pets when ingested. Certain supplements and vitamins (such as iron, vitamin D, and alpha-lipoic acid) can be highly toxic in overdose situations.
- **Plants:** Some common household plants can be toxic to dogs and cats. Lilies, for example, are extremely poisonous to cats and can cause renal failure. Even the pollen can be dangerous. A quick online search will yield a list of toxic plants to avoid.
- **Fragrance products/essential oils:** Liquid potpourri and many essential oils can be toxic to pets and can even cause chemical burns.
- **Smoking cessation products (like nicotine gum)/cigarette butts:** Nicotine is a poisonous substance to pets. Keep all products and ashtrays out of reach.
- **Batteries:** Some dogs chew on everything. If they chew on something like a remote or cell phone, the batteries can cause poisoning/chemical burns.
- **Glue:** Some glues, such as Gorilla Glue®, expand once ingested and require surgical removal. One ounce of glue can expand to the size of a basketball. Keep glues out of reach of your pets.
- **Cleaning products.** Most cleaning products contain chemicals that are toxic. Keep them stored in a secure area and keep your pets away while using.
- **Rodenticides, insecticides, herbicides, fertilizers, etc.:** Most of these products contain toxic chemicals or ingredients that can poison and be potentially life-threatening to your pets. Some, like bone meal or blood meal, can “taste good” to your pets. Keep these products tightly sealed and stored securely. Do not allow pets near areas that they have been treated until the products are dry (if they are “pet safe”).

- **Antifreeze and other automotive products:** Ethylene glycol (antifreeze) products are extremely toxic and, unfortunately, have a sweet taste that may be appealing to pets. Clean up spilled antifreeze immediately and choose a propylene glycol-based antifreeze for a safer alternative. Other automotive chemicals, such as brake fluid, can contain methanol which is also toxic to pets.

This list is not exhaustive. Prevention is the best way to keep your pets safe, but awareness of some of the more common symptoms of poisoning in pets is important: **Vomiting, diarrhea, drooling/hypersalivating, coughing of blood, pale or discolored gums, racing heart rate, weakness or lethargy, collapse, excessive thirst or urination, black-tarry stool, etc.**

If you have any reason to believe that your pet has been poisoned, **seek immediate medical attention.** Arizona Veterinary Emergency & Critical Care Center offers 24/7 emergency and critical care services, with four board-certified emergency and critical care specialists on staff.

ABOUT AVECCC

Arizona Veterinary Emergency & Critical Care Center (AVECCC) is located in Gilbert, Arizona and provides 24/7 emergency and critical care services to companion animals. AVECCC employs more than 100 professional, experienced staff members that have specialized training and certification in emergency and critical care services. The critical care center also has the distinct advantage of being the only emergency practice with four board-certified emergency and critical care specialists and a residency program in the Phoenix metro area. Their team is committed to providing the best training and education programs to both its resident veterinarians and those within the local veterinary community. AVECCC is proud to announce a new West Valley location which will be open Spring 2020. For more information about AVECCC, please visit www.azervets.com.

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List of the top 10 toxins in 2018, beginning with the category which caused the most calls to ASPCA's Animal Poison Control Center toxicologists. The data was gleaned from about 213,773 cases of potential animal poisonings examined by the APCC in 2018.

1) OTC MEDICATIONS: 19.6%

Over-the-counter medications were the most common group of toxicants pets ingested in 2018, with 41,865 cases reaching the APCC. This is a diverse group of medications including items such as vitamins, OTC pain medications (acetaminophen, ibuprofen and naproxen), herbal supplements, antihistamines and cold and flu medications.

2) HUMAN PRESCRIPTIONS: 17.5%

Medications prescribed for people saw 36,916 of total cases. ADHD medications, antidepressants and heart medications make up the majority.

3) FOOD: 11.4%

Food saw 24,469 cases. Xylitol, grapes and raisins, and onions and garlic make up the majority.

4) CHOCOLATE: 10.1%

21,635 of APCC cases involved chocolate. The popularity of chocolate gifts for occasions like Christmas, Valentine's Day and Easter adds to the danger.

5) VETERINARY PRODUCTS: 9.3%

Flavored medications and misread labels are a primary reason pets run into trouble with veterinary products.

6) HOUSEHOLD ITEMS: 7.3%

Household items—which includes items such as paint, glue, and cleaning products about to over 7% of cases in 2018.

7) RODENTICIDES: 6.3%

Rodenticide exposure increased last year to 13,391 of APCC's caseload. Unfortunately, pets find baits very tasty.

8) INSECTICIDES: 6.2%

Insecticide exposure cases decreased for the second year in a row to 13,260. Insecticides includes items such as ant baits, bug sprays and yard products. Ant baits use attractants like peanut butter which unfortunately attract pets as well as ants.

9) PLANTS: 5.5%

Plants remained in ninth place with 11,857 of total cases. Indoor and outdoor plants as well as prepared bouquets can present major problems.

10) GARDEN PRODUCTS: 2.3%

Fertilizer, bone meal and compost are all garden products many dogs find irresistible. APCC also gets a fair number of calls about herbicides. Herbicides are often used in areas frequented by pets.