

Dangerous Medicines

Common Drugs (& Household Products) That Can Kill Your Pet

There are a number of common household medications that can be life-threatening for pets. Dogs and cats are unique in many ways. Pets are not just small people, but instead have many biological differences. You cannot simply assume that a pill or drug you obtained for your child or yourself is going to be beneficial for your pet. For instance, one Tylenol or Aspirin tablet can kill a cat in a matter of hours, because cats metabolize these drugs differently than we do. Dogs, on the other hand, can handle aspirin well, but acetaminophen (the main ingredient in Tylenol) can harm their livers. Pepto Bismol contains a similar ingredient to aspirin and can also be very toxic to cats. A multitude of other chemical substances can be found in the home medicine cabinet that, while safe for humans, must be considered dangerous if ingested by a pet. They include benzocaine, a local anesthetic used to relieve skin irritations, and hexachlorophene, an antiseptic used in soaps. Responsible pet owners can make the mistake of wiping their pets' water bowls with a cleanser and then, without rinsing it thoroughly, fill the bowls with water for their pets. The diluted disinfectant is then lapped up by the unsuspecting animals.

Pet owners should also take care not to leave any medication on a counter where an animal might come upon them or where they are in reach of a child, who might playfully or mischievously feed a pill to the family pet. When it comes to medications, the bottom line is that under no circumstances should a pet owner administer medications from the household medicine cabinet. In addition to medications, the list of common household substances that are toxic to pets is almost endless. These substances include

bleach, laundry detergent, furniture polish, mothballs, rubbing alcohol, shoe polish, windshield washer fluid, anti-freeze, insect baits and rat poisons. A pet can die from ingesting any of these and many other substances. All pet owners will want to make sure that such dangerous materials are stored in places that are inaccessible to even the most curious cat or exploring puppy. In every case of a pet's apparent illness or discomfort, a veterinarian should be consulted regarding the proper administration of medicine. Pets are valued family members, and we should always seek professional veterinary help whenever they are sick.