

Northwoods Humane Society – Deanna Persson, President

Being aware of potential dangers that may harm our pets is a responsibility of pet owners. Never, can we know all the pitfalls in front of us as we traverse our paths in life. That is a good thing – who would want to know about all the things that can go wrong. We just take them one at a time or however they arrive at our door step and deal with them the best we can. But sometimes a simple nudge will give us a heads up to avoid some of the potential issues.

I found an article on WebMD Veterinary Reference that talked about the top 10 dog poisons. Although the article was written for dogs it also applies to cats. The number one dog poison is prescription medications for people. They may be great for us but not for our pets if taken in a large dose. Prescription anti-inflammatory and pain medications can cause intestinal ulcers and kidney failure, antidepressants can cause vomiting and in more serious instances serotonin syndrome – a dangerous condition that raises temperature, heart rate and blood pressure, and may cause seizures. Blood pressure medications are poisonous for our pets.

Dog poison No. 2: Insecticides: Flea and tick products – you may think you are doing your pet a favor when you apply products marketed to fight fleas and ticks, but thousands of animals are unintentionally poisoned by these products every year. Problems can occur if dogs accidentally ingest these products or if small dogs or cats receive excessive amounts. Some pets may have allergic reactions.

Dog poison No. 3: Over the counter medications – the group that contains acetaminophen (Tylenol), ibuprofen and naproxen (Advil, Aleve), as well as herbal and nutraceutical products (fish oil, joint supplements).

Dog poison No. 4 – Pet medications. Just as our pets can be sickened or killed by medications intended for people, cases of pet poisoning by veterinary drugs are not uncommon. Some of the more commonly reported problem medications include painkillers and de-wormers.

Dog poison No. 5: Household products, from cleaners to fire logs. Just as cleaners like bleach can poison people, they are also a leading cause of pet poisoning, resulting in stomach and respiratory tract problems. Not surprisingly, chemicals contained in antifreeze, paint thinner, and chemicals for pools also can act as dog poison. The pet poisoning symptoms they may produce include stomach upset, depression, and chemical burns.

Dog poison No. 6: People food -Avocado – have a substance called Persin that can act as a dog poison, causing vomiting and diarrhea. Alcohol – poisoning symptoms in animals are similar to those in people, and may include vomiting, breathing problems, coma and in severe cases, death. Macadamia nuts – may cause dogs to suffer from weakness, overheating, and vomiting. Grapes and raisins can induce kidney failure in dogs. Even a small number may cause problems in some pets. Xylitol – is a sweetener found in many products including sugar-free gum and candy. It causes a rapid drop in blood sugar, resulting in weakness and seizures. Liver failure also has been reported in some dogs.

No. 7 – Chocolate – though not harmful to people, chocolate products contain substances called methylxanthines that can cause vomiting in small doses and death if ingested in larger quantities. Darker chocolate contains more of these dangerous substances than do white or milk chocolate. The amount of chocolate that could result in death depends on the type of chocolate and the size of the dog. For smaller breeds just half an ounce of baking chocolate can be fatal, while a larger dog might survive eating 4 – 8 ounces. Coffee and caffeine have similarly dangerous chemicals.

No. 8 – Plants include azaleas and rhododendrons, tulips and daffodils and Sago palms.

No. 9 – Rodenticides, if ingested by dogs or cats can cause severe problems. The symptoms depend on the nature of the poison, and signs may not start for several days after consumption. In some instances, the animal (this includes wildlife) may have eaten the poisoned rodent, and not been directly exposed to the toxin.

No. 10 – Lawn and garden products

If you think your pet may have been poisoned gather up the potential poison that remains if possible. If your dog pet has vomited, collect a sample in case your veterinarian needs to see it. If possible don't wait until the next day – see a vet as soon as possible. You can also call the ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center at 888-426-4435