



Healthy Pet Tips

Important tips for recognizing pet poisoning.

Each year thousands of dogs and cats needlessly suffer and many die from accidental ingestion of household poisons, including popular houseplants, medications, common foods and pesticides.

In fact, last year's pet food poisoning tragedy has taught us, your pets can be poisoned no matter how careful you are with them, or if they ever leave the house. **Veterinary Pet Insurance**, for example, received nearly 1,000 claims last year alone for dogs suffering from drug reactions and toxicity, ranking in the top 100 types of claims submitted.

In order to be prepared for such an accident, it is important to know the signs of poisoning in your pet. As with many illnesses, a change in normal behavior is the number one sign that something is wrong. Does your pet appear drowsy or uncomfortable? Is your pet experiencing vomiting, diarrhea or excessive urination? It can be as subtle as a change in breathing.

"It is critical that people pay very close attention to their pet's normal routines and daily patterns, so that they will notice if there is a change in that behavior," explains Dr. Carol McConnell, a veterinarian and chief medical officer at Veterinary Pet Insurance. "If you suspect that your pet has been poisoned, immediately take your pet to the veterinarian."

Here is a list of other signs that your pet may have been poisoned:

- Unusual salivation or drooling.
- Unsteady walk or movements, including tremors.
- Changes in gum color to blue, pale or bright red, or burn marks on the gum.
- Strange odors on the breath or skin.
- Disorientation or overreaction to light and sound.

In addition to the emotional toll poisoning can have on pet owners, there is a financial impact-treatment can be expensive. Fortunately, a pet health insurance plan can provide coverage for illnesses caused by ingestion of toxic substances, including consumption of contaminated pet food that causes illness. As with any insurance, your pet must be covered by a health insurance policy before any accident or illness occurs.

Being fiscally prepared for any catastrophic accident or illness that might be inflicted upon your furry family member is just as important as annual visits to the veterinarian.

With VPI® Pet Insurance, for example, medical plans that provide year-round coverage for dogs, cats, birds and pocket pets such as hamsters can start at less than \$25 a month for dogs and cats and under \$10 monthly for pets such as reptiles. Coverage spans from accidents to illnesses and helps pay for diagnostic tests, treatments, office visits, lab fees, prescriptions, hospitalization, X-rays, and surgical procedures.

To learn more about protecting your pets and to obtain a free quote, call 877-PETS-VPI or log onto eb.petinsurance.com

VPI Pet Insurance plans cover dogs, cats, birds and exotic pets for medical problems and conditions relating to accidents, illnesses and injuries. Optional Pet wellCare Protection Coverage is also available. All applications are subject to underwriting approval. Policies are available in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. Policies are underwritten by Veterinary Pet Insurance Company in California and in all other states by National Casualty Company, an A+15 rated company, in Madison, Wisconsin and a subsidiary of Nationwide Mutual Insurance Company.
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