
A-Way to Wag Paw Prints

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TOXIN TALK

Like it or not, our world is filled with chemicals and toxins that can harm your dog or cat. It's impossible to eliminate them all, but there are plenty of ways you can reduce his exposure and preserve his wellness.

One of the key ways to a healthy dog or cat is minimizing his exposure to chemicals and other toxins. That's hard to do in today's world, where our soil, water and air are mostly all polluted to some degree. Aside from keeping your companion in a plastic bubble, what can you do to protect them? Quite a lot, as it turns out.

Indoor toxins range from houseplants and some human foods to cleaning products and pharmaceuticals. Be sure to keep all toxic items out of your animal's reach. Poisonous houseplants should either be discarded or given away, or placed in an inaccessible area. Medications should be kept in locked cabinets and household cleaners replaced with safer alternatives.

POISONOUS PLANTS AND FLOWERS

- Amaryllis
- Crocus
- Buttercup
- Calla lily
- Christmas rose
- Chrysanthemum
- Daffodil bulbs
- Easter lily
- Foxglove
- Hyacinth bulbs
- Iris Roots
- Jessamine
- Morning glory
- Peony
- Periwinkle
- Primrose
- Tulip bulbs



Protect your companion by replacing poisonous plants with these non-toxic varieties:

- African violet
- Wandering Jew
- Peperonias
- Jade plant
- Christmas cactus

FOODS TO AVOID

Many people like to treat their animals to a bite or even a whole meal of food that even themselves enjoy. But what is good for you is not always good for your pet. Don't feed the following foods to your companion and make sure they are never left out on counters or tables.

- Grapes and raisins – cause irreversible damage to a dog's kidneys
- Onions – causes a condition called Heinz body anemia which damages red blood cells
- Chocolate – damaging to the dog's heart, lungs, kidneys and central nervous system
- Caffeine – causes the same type of damage as chocolate; is most toxic in the form of pills, coffee, coffee beans and large amounts of tea
- Macadamia nuts – cause severe illness
- Alcohol and yeast dough – both contain ethanol, which cause nervous system and respiratory depression
- Fruit pits and seeds – the pits found in apples, cherries and plums contain cyanide

MEDICATIONS

Any medication can be poisonous. Make sure all pills are kept in a secure cabinet or on a high shelf a cat can't reach. Even medications prescribed by your veterinarian can be harmful if you don't follow dosing instructions. These include:

- Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDS)
- Heartworm preventative
- De-wormers
- Antibiotics

Never give the following human medications to your dog or cat:

- Tylenol
- Ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin, etc)
- All prescription drugs

Non-toxic human medications include aspirin, Pepto Bismol, Kaopectate, Imodium AD and Pepcid AC – however, even these are not meant to be given to a dog or cat on a regular basis and should administered according to a veterinarian's dosing instructions.

HOUSEHOLD CLEANING ET AL

Animals not only get ill by ingesting poisons, but by absorbing them through their noses or skin. Some of these toxins include chemical cleaning products, insecticides, fertilizers and many commercial flea controls.

Toxic household cleaners can be replaced with baking soda, Borax (sodium borate), lemon, white vinegar and cornstarch. Corn meal and Epsom salts can be used in place of lawn and plant fertilizers. Make sure to keep any rodent poisons away from your animal, and don't spray for insects near his favorite hangouts.

Many popular flea products contain ingredients such as carbaryl and DDVP, which can paralyze your dog's nerves. These ingredients can be found in commercial flea powders, sprays, collars, shampoos and dips. The best way to naturally protect your dog or cat from fleas is to help him build a strong healthy immune system. Start by feeding him a natural diet that doesn't contain chemical preservatives, artificial coloring or by-products. Along with a good diet, be sure to bath your companion with natural non-medicated shampoo and groom him regularly.

BEYOND YOUR CONTROL?

You can't completely shield your companion from contaminants found in our air and water, but there are steps you can take to enhance his safety.

AIR POLLUTION PROTECTION

1. Keep your dog or cat inside on bad air days.
2. Use an indoor air filter.
3. Avoid strenuous exercise on really hot days.
4. Don't use your fireplace on bad air days.

WATER CONTAMINATION PROTECTION

1. Invest in a water purifier.
2. Don't let your animal drink from lakes, streams, creeks or puddles.
3. Always carry bottle water on hikes.
4. Keep water bowls clean.

You may not be able to keep an eye on your companion 24/7, but you can protect his safety and health by keeping all potential toxins stored out of reach inside the house (and your garage), and reducing his exposure to environmental toxins in the world at large.

Resource: *Animal Wellness Magazine*

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