

What to do if your pet gets poisoned

Your pet has just ingested something toxic. What do you do? First, take a deep breath. The more calm, cool, and collected you are, the sooner you can seek the correct medical attention. Then get a handle on the situation by taking the following steps:

1. Remove your pet from the area. Make sure no other pets or children are exposed to the area, and safely remove any poisonous material.
2. Check to make sure your pet is breathing normally and acting fine otherwise.
3. Collect a sample of the material, along with the packaging, vial, or container. You'll need that information to help your veterinarian or a pet poison expert assess the situation.
4. Don't give your dog any milk, food, salt, oil, or any other home remedies. Doing so will likely complicate the poisoning.
5. Never induce vomiting without talking to your veterinarian or a pet poison expert—doing so may be detrimental or contraindicated. Sometimes, to induce vomiting in dogs, it may be recommended to give hydrogen peroxide. However, hydrogen peroxide won't help induce vomiting in cats, and stronger veterinary prescription medications are necessary to get your cat to vomit up any toxins.
6. Get help. Program your veterinarian's phone number into your phone, as well as an emergency veterinarian's number and a pet poison hotline number. There are two 24-hour hotlines: Pet Poison Helpline at 800-213-6680 (\$35 per call) and the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animal's Animal Poison Control Center at 888-426-4435 (\$65 per call).

Remember that a pet's prognosis is always better when a toxicity is reported immediately, so don't wait to see if your pet becomes symptomatic before calling for help. Calling right away is safer for your pet and could help you save on treatment costs in the long run. Remember that there's a narrow window of time to decontaminate in cases of poisoning.