

# Hazardous to Your Pet's Health!

By Sherry Woodard

## At Home

Your pets rely on you to protect them from harm. In general, you should only feed your pets food and treats specially formulated for the type of pet that you have. Some human food and drink can make animals sick, so keep them out of your pets' reach. Here are some examples:

- Alcoholic beverages
- Substances containing caffeine, such as coffee
- Chocolate
- Fatty foods, especially drippings and grease from cooking
- Chicken and turkey bones
- Grapes and raisins
- Onions
- Macadamia nuts
- Salt and sugar
- Yeast dough
- All medications (aspirin is especially harmful to cats)



Many other things in or around your home can cause serious illness or even death in your pet. Here are some examples:

- Antifreeze
- Bait for rodents
- Batteries (they can contain corrosive fluid)
- Car care products, such as cleaners or oils
- Fertilizer
- Household cleaners
- Ice-melting products
- Nicotine products
- Pesticides for insects
- Plants that are toxic to pets
- Pool or pond products
- Poisonous snakes



Other potential dangers in your home include burning candles that may be knocked over, electrical cords that can be chewed, and loose cords or wires that animals may become tangled in. Take a look around your house and make it pet-safe.

For more information on what to do for a poisoned animal, what plants are poisonous, and how to poison-proof your home, visit the ASPCA website ([www.aspca.org](http://www.aspca.org)) and click on “Animal Poison Control Center.” If you suspect your pet has been poisoned and you need immediate assistance, you can call the ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center at (888) 426-4435. The nonprofit hotline is staffed 24/7 by a team of veterinarians, including veterinary toxicologists; the consultation fee is \$50.

## **Away from Home**

Here are some things to avoid when traveling with your pet:

- Don't let your pet ride in the back of an open truck. He can be injured if you need to brake suddenly or take a sharp turn. Tying the animal to the truck doesn't solve the problem; he can still be seriously hurt or killed. If you must use the back of a truck to transport a pet, put the animal in a secure crate that is anchored so it doesn't move around in the bed of the truck.
- Never leave your pet in a vehicle in hot weather, even for a few minutes. Even with the windows wide open, the car can quickly become hot enough to cause heatstroke, brain damage, and even death.

Finally, don't let your pet roam. He or she can suffer injury or death from running at large. Your pet doesn't understand the danger of speeding cars, poisoned bait or trespassing on someone else's property.

*Sherry Woodard is the dog training and care consultant at Best Friends. She develops resources and provides consulting services nationally to help achieve Best Friends' No More Homeless Pets mission.*

See also: [Holiday Hazards for Pets](#)