

Dog CPR, First Aid & Safety for Pet Professionals & Dedicated Owners

Poisoning

Dogs most often become poisoned by ingesting something they shouldn't, but poisons can also be inhaled or absorbed through the skin. Common sources of pet poisoning include toxic plants or foods, prescription and non-prescription medications, rodent or snail baits, household cleaners, garden chemicals, antifreeze, recreational drugs and flea and tick products. Please study the list included with this lesson to familiarize yourself with these and other common toxic substances to help you prevent a poison emergency.

The signs of poisoning vary widely depending on the type of poison, and can develop immediately or not until days later. **All poisonings are an emergency. Take immediate action the moment you discover a potential poisoning or notice the signs.** Familiarize yourself with immediate first aid actions for poisoning, and test your knowledge with the companion quiz to this lesson.

ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center
Hotline: 888-426-4435
aspca.org

Serving all of North America, they have veterinary toxicologists on-call 24/7. A consultation fee may be charged to your credit card after they've helped you. If you live outside North America, call your veterinarian or local human poison control center (which usually has pet poison information) in a poisoning emergency.

SIGNS OF POISONING

- Severe vomiting or diarrhea (with or without blood or particles of the ingested poison)
- Seizures, twitching, trembling, extreme anxiousness, hyperexcitability
- Heavy drooling, salivation, foaming at the mouth
- Abnormal gum color such as pale, gray, brown, bright red or blue (normal color is pink unless dog has black pigmented gums)
- Depression, drowsiness, "drunken" behavior, incoordination
- Swollen, irritated, watering eyes or red, inflamed skin
- Ulcers in mouth, burned lips or tongue
- Bleeding from mouth, nose, ears or anus
- Coughing heavily, difficulty breathing, collapse



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First Aid for Ingested Poisons

- **Check dog's ABCs and begin rescue breathing/CPR if needed.** Refer to CPR lesson to refresh your knowledge if necessary.
- **Gather information and call the poison hotline or your veterinarian.** Be ready to give the dog's age, weight, and type and quantity of toxic substance involved; when the ingestion occurred; and when the dog's last meal was eaten. If you're able, quickly check dog's vital signs such as gum color and capillary refill time (CRT).
- **Make dog vomit IF advised by vet.** You'll need 3% USP hydrogen peroxide and either an oral syringe or measuring spoon. Give 1 Tablespoon (15ml) per 20 pounds (9kg) of body weight. For dogs under 20 pounds (9kg), give 1 to 2 teaspoons (5 to 10 ml) per 10 pounds (5kg) of body weight. Mix with a little milk in a saucer to see if dog will drink it willingly. Otherwise, use the oral syringe or clean eyedropper to squirt it into the pouch of dog's cheek. The dog should vomit within a few minutes. If not, the dose may be repeated up to 3 times, 15 minutes apart.
- **Ask about activated charcoal.** If you have activated charcoal (such as Toxiban) in your dog's first aid kit, tell the vet or poison hotline. Depending on when the poison was ingested and how long it will take to get to the hospital they may instruct you on how to use it.
- **Take dog to nearest animal hospital asap.** If you've only been speaking with poison hotline, be sure to call vet to alert them of your arrival. Sometimes the poison hotline personnel will also call your vet to consult with them on the best treatment. ****Bring any bottles or packaging containing suspected poison with you. If dog's signs included vomiting or diarrhea, collect sample in plastic bag and bring with you to help vet identify best treatment/antidote.**

***Do not induce vomiting unless instructed by veterinarian or poison control hotline**

In many cases, making your dog vomit may cause more harm to the dog. Instances when vomiting may be dangerous include:

- The toxin is suspected to be caustic (i.e. drain cleaner) an acid (i.e. battery) or petroleum based, or packaging warns not to induce vomiting. In these cases vomiting can burn dog's throat and cause even more damage on its way up
- The dog is having difficulty breathing, seizures, or is in a depressed, woozy, hyperexcitable or unconscious state. Under these conditions the dog could choke or suffocate on his vomit
- The object eaten is sharp or jagged
- The dog has a history of bloat



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First Aid for Topical Poisons

If the dog has had a toxic substance such as motor oil, paint, turpentine, or insecticide spilled on his fur or skin, your first step is to wash it off as quickly as possible to stop the absorption.

- **Wear rubber gloves** to protect yourself while providing first aid.
- **Remove dog's collar** if the substance was spilled near his head or neck.
- **For non-oily substances**, flush the area with water for several minutes.
- **For oil-based substances**, use a mild, grease-cutting dishwashing liquid and water.
- **To treat the eye area**, gently but thoroughly flush with water or a sterile eye wash.
- **If the poison is in powder form**, dust, brush or vacuum off as much as possible before washing with plenty of water and shampoo or mild dishwashing liquid.
- **Call your veterinarian or pet poison hotline asap** to determine next steps.

***When flushing toxins, make sure the water run off is flowing away from you and the dog.**

First Aid for Inhaled Poisons

Inhaled poisons include carbon monoxide from leaks in gas and propane home heaters; smoke inhalation from being trapped in a house fire; ammonia gas from harsh cleansers; chemical fumes from weed killers and pesticides; and fumes from oil-based paints. Dogs are most often exposed to inhaled poisons when they're confined in an unventilated area.

- **Get the dog to fresh air immediately.**
- **Check dog's ABCs and begin CPR if needed.**
- **Check dog's gum color and capillary refill time (CRT).** A dog's normal gum color is pink. Bright red and other gum colors will help the vet determine the dog's state.
- **Watch for shock** and treat if needed.
- **Call the vet asap** for specific instructions and transport dog to the animal hospital.
- **Poisoning can sometimes cause seizures.** If this happens, it is likely the seizure will end within a couple of minutes. Keep the dog safe by removing any obstacles nearby and turn down the lights or place a towel loosely over his eyes to create a dark environment. Do not try to hold the dog's tongue, shake him or speak to him during or immediately after a seizure. When it has ended, wrap the dog in a towel or blanket and transport to vet.

