



Pet Poison Helpline Spring Newsletter:

## Spring Dangers

We still have snow on the ground in Minneapolis, MN, home of Pet Poison Helpline. Nevertheless, even we Minnesotans can smell spring in the air! With spring, comes an increased risk for potential poison dangers to your pets. Here, a list of some common spring plants, so you know how to pet-proof your garden and keep your pet safe!

### Tulips and hyacinths

Both hyacinths and tulips belong to the *Liliaceae* family, and contain allergenic lactones (tuliposides A and B) or similar alkaloids. The toxic principle is very concentrated in the bulbs (versus the leaf or flower), and when ingested in large amounts, can result in severe clinical signs. Severe poisoning from hyacinth or tulip poisoning is often seen when dogs dig up freshly planted bulbs or having access to a large bag of them. When the plant parts or bulbs are chewed or ingested, it can result in tissue irritation to the mouth and esophagus, along with generalized gastroenteritis (e.g., vomiting, diarrhea).



**Common signs to watch for, depending on the amount consumed, include:**

- Drooling
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea

**With larger ingestions, more severe signs may include:**

- Increased heart rate
- Increased respiratory rate
- Difficulty breathing

Our Pet Poison Helpline record? A Labrador retriever eating 20 tulip bulbs in one sitting. If your dog or cat chewed into a tulip or hyacinth, treatment may include rinsing of the mouth, anti-vomiting medication, and even fluids to help keep your pet hydrated. With massive ingestions, emesis induction may be necessary to prevent the bulbs from getting stuck in the stomach and causing a foreign body obstruction.

### Daffodils

This group of flowers *Narcissus spp.* includes paper whites, daffodils, jonquils, and Narcissus, and are a personal favorite here at Pet Poison Helpline (first signs of spring!). These beautiful flowers contain lycorine, an alkaloid with strong emetic properties (something that triggers vomiting). Ingestion of the bulb, plant or flower can cause severe vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain, and even possible cardiac arrhythmias or respiratory depression (with large ingestions). Daffodils contain tiny crystals that are found in the outer layer of the bulbs, similar to hyacinths, which cause severe tissue irritation and secondary drooling when ingested. In general, these plants result in just mild gastroenteritis.



**Common signs to watch for with daffodil poisoning include:**

- Drooling
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea

**With larger ingestions of daffodils, more severe signs may include:**

- Increased heart rate
- Abdominal pain
- Abnormal breathing
- Cardiac arrhythmias

**Lilies**

There are benign and dangerous lilies out there, and it's important to know the difference. Dangerous lilies ("true lilies") cause acute kidney failure and can be life-threatening. Benign lilies include the Peace, Peruvian, and Calla lilies; these contain insoluble oxalate crystals that cause minor signs such as tissue irritation to the mouth, tongue, pharynx, and esophagus. Clinical signs of drooling, pawing at the mouth, foaming, and vomiting may be transiently seen.



The *more dangerous, potentially fatal lilies* are true lilies of the *Lilium* or *Hemerocallis* species. Examples of some of these dangerous lilies include the tiger, day, Asiatic hybrid, Easter, Japanese Show, rubrum, stargazer, red, Western, and wood lilies – all of which are highly toxic to cats! Even small ingestions (such as 2-3 petals or leaves) – even the pollen or water from the vase – can result in severe, acute kidney failure.

**Signs of lily poisoning include:**

- Inappetance
- Lethargy
- Hiding
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Halitosis
- Dehydration
- Inappropriate urination or thirst
- Seizures
- Death

If your cat is seen consuming any part of a lily, bring your cat (and the plant) immediately to a veterinarian for medical care. The sooner you bring in your cat, the better and more effectively the lily poisoning can be treated. Decontamination (like inducing vomiting and giving binders like activated charcoal) are imperative in the early toxic stage, while aggressive intravenous fluid therapy, kidney function monitoring tests, and supportive care can greatly improve the prognosis. Intravenous fluids must be started within an 18 hour window for the best outcome, and treatment typically requires 72 hours of aggressive fluid therapy.

### **Crocus**

There are two Crocus plants: one that blooms in the spring ([Crocus spp.](#)) and the other in the autumn (*Colchicum autumnale*). The spring plants are more common and are part of the *Iridaceae* family. These ingestions can cause general gastrointestinal upset including vomiting and diarrhea. These should not be mistaken for Autumn Crocus, part of the *Liliaceae* family, which contain colchicine. The Autumn Crocus, also known as Meadow Saffron, is highly toxic and can cause severe vomiting, gastrointestinal bleeding, liver and kidney damage, and respiratory failure. If you are not sure what plant it is, bring your pet to their veterinarian immediately for care. Signs may be seen immediately but can be delayed for days.



### **Lily of the Valley**

This type of invasive plant has the name "lily" in it, but does not cause kidney failure like true lilies. However, it can be just as dangerous. The lily of the valley, or *Convallaria majalis*, contains cardiac glycosides, which will cause symptoms similar to digitalis (foxglove) ingestion. These symptoms include vomiting, diarrhea, a drop in heart rate, severe cardiac arrhythmias, and possibly seizures. Pets with any known exposure to this plant should be examined and evaluated by a veterinarian and treated symptomatically and immediately. Treatment typically includes decontamination (if appropriate), charcoal administration, heart and blood pressure monitoring, intravenous fluids, heart medication (to control the rhythm), and supportive care.



If you think your pet may have ingested something harmful, take action immediately. Contact a veterinarian or Pet Poison Helpline at **1-800-213-6680**. Pet Poison Helpline is the most cost-effective animal poison control center in North America charging only \$39 per call; this includes unlimited follow-up consultations. Pet Poison Helpline also has an iPhone application listing an extensive database of over 200 poisons dangerous to cats and dogs. "Pet Poison Help" is available on iTunes for \$1.99.

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### **About Pet Poison Helpline**

Pet Poison Helpline, an animal poison control center based out of Minneapolis, is available 24 hours, seven days a week for pet owners and veterinary professionals that require assistance treating a potentially poisoned pet. The staff provides treatment advice for poisoning cases of all species, including dogs, cats, birds, small mammals, large animals and exotic species. As the most cost-effective option for animal poison control care, Pet Poison Helpline's fee of \$39 per incident includes follow-up consultation for the duration of the poison case. Pet Poison Helpline is available in North America by calling 800-213-6680. Additional information can be found online at [www.petpoisonhelpline.com](http://www.petpoisonhelpline.com).



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