

With the Easter holiday and Mother's Day almost here, "lily season" is upon us. To raise awareness among cat owners that these common flowers can be deadly to their feline friends, Pet Poison Helpline is launching an educational campaign—"No Lilies for Kitties." Please feel free to share the information below with the 36 million cat owners in the U.S.

If you'd like an interview with one of Pet Poison Helpline's veterinarians regarding this or any other pet-related topic, please let me know.

My best, Kathy Wahlers



For Immediate Release

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No Lilies for Kitties!

An Educational Campaign to Raise Awareness about a Common and Deadly Feline Toxin

MINNEAPOLIS, Minn. (April 3, 2015) – Very few of the 36 million cat owners in the U.S. know that bringing home an Easter lily or bouquet of beautiful stargazer lilies puts the lives of their feline companions in jeopardy. Lilies in the "true lily" and daylily families such as Easter lilies, stargazer lilies, tiger lilies, Asiatic lilies, and Oriental lilies are highly toxic to cats. Ingestion of just one petal, leaf, or even the pollen, can cause kidney failure in less than three days. Unlike common pet toxins like chocolate, studies suggest less than 30 percent of cat owners realize how deadly these plants can be. This lack of understanding, coupled with the popularity of the flowers, results in thousands of feline poisonings and deaths each year.

In an effort to raise awareness, the veterinarians of Pet Poison Helpline, in partnership with the Minnesota Veterinary Medical Association, are launching an educational campaign – **No Lilies for Kitties!** They have created an educational website, www.noliliesforkitties.com, which includes a one minute video produced by Pet Poison Helpline, educational articles, lists of toxic and less-toxic lilies, safer cut-flower options, and other materials that can be downloaded, printed, or shared on social media.

Dr. Ahna Brutlag, veterinary toxicologist and associate director of Veterinary Services at Pet Poison Helpline, recounts a common scenario, "I'm frequently asked the question – 'if there's just one toxin that pet owners should know about, what is it?' My answer is always the same – lilies. Most people are unaware that ingestion of any part of a lily can be fatal for cats. This is of particular concern given the popularity of lilies in bouquets and gardens."

Many plants are called "lilies." Which ones are concerning?

Many plants have the word "lily" in the name, so it's important to know which species are toxic. The most dangerous and potentially fatal lilies for cats are genus *Lilium* (the "true lilies")

and *Hemerocallis* (daylilies). Common examples include the Easter lily (*L. longiflorum*), stargazer lily (*L. orientalis*), tiger lily (*L. tigrinum* or *L. lancifolium*), Asiatic hybrid lily (many varieties of *Lilium* spp.), wood lily (*L. philadelphicum*), and daylily (*Hemerocallis* spp.). Due to their beauty, longevity, fragrance, and affordability, these flowers are often in cut-flower bouquets or sold as potted plants for Easter. Ingestion of *any* part of the plant, including leaves, flowers, pollen, or even the water from the vase can result in rapid kidney failure in cats leading to medical emergencies that require immediate veterinary care. Early decontamination, intravenous fluid therapy, kidney function tests, and supportive care greatly improve the cat's prognosis. A delay of treatment of more than 18 hours after ingestion generally results in irreversible kidney failure. Due to the high risk of fatality, Pet Poison Helpline recommends these flowers never be brought into homes with cats.

What should be done if a cat ingests a lily?

If a cat consumes any part of a "lily" plant, the pet owner should call Pet Poison Helpline or bring the cat *and the plant* to a veterinarian as soon as possible. The veterinary professionals and board-certified veterinary toxicologists at Pet Poison Helpline are accessible 24/7 by calling 800-213-6680 – these are the professionals that veterinarians turn to for poison consultations. They will help the pet owner determine if the cat can be treated at home, or if it needs to be taken to the veterinary hospital. If veterinary care is needed, Pet Poison Helpline will provide guidance and medical advice directly to the veterinarian as well.

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.

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