

protect your cat from common household dangers

basic feline care

A cat's curiosity can get them in a lot of trouble. As the pet parent of a cat, it is your responsibility to make sure your home environment is free from harm.

How to recognize danger:

When you look around your house, you may think that everything looks perfectly safe. But you and your cat may have very different views on what could be a toy or a tasty snack. When you cat-proof your house, try to see it from your cat's perspective. Hunker down to the height of your cat's line of sight and take a look at what your cat sees. Look around for any hidden dangers that your cat may get into. Simply use common sense and take the same precautions as you would with a child.

Common chemical dangers:

Most of us have homes with many different types of toxic chemicals used for cleaning.

Chemical poisoning most commonly occurs when cats:

- Drink a tainted substance
- Clean a toxic substance from their fur
- Eat a poisoned pest
- Ingest household cleaning agents
- Eat air fresheners

Some items to watch out for include:

- Antifreeze that contains ethylene glycol, which has a sweet taste that attracts animals but is deadly if consumed
- Chemicals used on lawns and gardens, such as fertilizer, weed preventives and plant food



Developed with and approved by a qualified veterinarian.

- ❑ Rodent poisons and insecticides are one of the most common sources of poisoning
- ❑ De-icing salts used to melt snow and ice are paw irritants that can be poisonous if licked off

Common food dangers:

A cat's body is quite different from humans. Food items that are beneficial to a human can be toxic to cats. It is best not to feed your cat table scraps. A few items of note to keep in mind include:

- ❑ Chocolate, grapes and raisins, avocados and alcohol are toxic to cats
- ❑ Human medication, such as painkillers, cold medicines, vitamins, diet pills and others, can all be toxic to animals
- ❑ Leftovers such as chicken bones easily shatter and can stab or choke a cat

Common household item dangers:

Objects that seem harmless can become a danger to your cat if used improperly or accidentally ingested. Some of the most attractive objectives to a cat can be the most dangerous. Aluminum foil, corks and balls of cellophane are all tremendously appealing to a cat but can be a choking hazard. Some common items that can be hazardous include:

- ❑ String, yarn, rubber bands, coins and even dental floss are easy to swallow and can cause intestinal blockages or strangulations
- ❑ Toys with removable parts (squeaky toys, stuffed animals with plastic eyes and ribbons) can pose a choking hazard to your cat; as a rule, always use toys no smaller than a ping-pong ball to avoid choking
- ❑ Reclining chairs and other foldout furniture can be hazardous to your cat if they decide to crawl inside for a nap while someone pulls it out
- ❑ Warm places like the dryer can be dangerous if left open; to a cat this may

look like the perfect napping spot

- ❑ Stuffed toys, if ripped apart, can be dangerous
- ❑ Many ornamental house plants are toxic to animals
- ❑ Stoves and ovens can seriously injure your cat; if your cat is a counter surfer, be sure they are never up there when the stove is on and the oven door is never left open

Household safety checklist inside the home:

- ❑ All doors, including patio entrances, are closed
- ❑ Pet doors are the right size and close properly
- ❑ Dangerous food, such as chocolate, is out of reach
- ❑ Medication, dietary supplements and antibiotics are safely out of reach
- ❑ All the garbage in the house is secure and inaccessible
- ❑ All cleaning supplies are out of reach
- ❑ All dangerous objects are off the floor and out of reach
- ❑ Toilet bowl lid is closed and no sanitizing flush products are in use
- ❑ All sharp objects that might cut your cat's paws or mouth are put away
- ❑ Childproof latches are on all cabinets containing hazardous substances so your cat can't 'slip' the latch
- ❑ Poisonous plants have been cat-proofed or placed where your cat can't get them
- ❑ Toys that could be dangerous if swallowed have been picked up
- ❑ Pesticides have been placed out of reach or replaced with nontoxic substances
- ❑ Hot stoves are covered and sharp items on kitchen counters are put away
- ❑ Your cat has toys to chew on to help prevent chewing on electrical wiring or other dangerous objects

What to do if your cat is poisoned:

Keep a good cat emergency handbook and a first aid kit in your home. Know how much your cat weighs, since treatments are often measured in proportion to the animal's weight.

If you think your cat has consumed any dangerous products, the first thing you must do is determine what substance is responsible. Read the product's label for the list of ingredients and for any instructions on accidental ingestion. Call your veterinarian immediately. If your pet needs to make a trip to the veterinarian, remember to take the product container in question with you to give your veterinarian a better idea of what your pet may have ingested. You can also call the National Animal Poison Control Center.

Observe your cat's symptoms carefully. If your cat is vomiting or has diarrhea, you may want to take samples to the vet to help with diagnosis. The treatment will vary according to the poison, and whether it has been ingested, inhaled or absorbed through the skin.

Note: The information on this Care Sheet is not a substitute for veterinary care. If you need additional information, please contact your veterinarian.