

New Educational Campaign: “No Lilies for Kitties!”



To all veterinary professionals and cat lovers,

As veterinary professionals, we know that the majority of the 36 million cat owners in the U.S. are unaware of the danger created by bringing home an Easter lily or bouquet of beautiful stargazer lilies. Many of us have witnessed the devastating and untimely death of feline patients due to acute renal failure from lily poisoning. With the Easter holiday and Mother’s Day rapidly approaching, the veterinarians from Pet Poison Helpline, in partnership with the Minnesota Veterinary Medical Association, are launching an educational campaign to raise awareness about this deadly feline toxin--“**No Lilies for Kitties!**”

As a veterinary toxicologist I’m frequently asked, “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. 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.

Free Educational Materials for Veterinary Hospitals

Please warn your clients about lily poisoning by participating in the ‘No Lilies for Kitties!’ campaign. We have created a host of printable and shareable educational materials at www.noliliesforkitties.com, including a one minute video about lily poisoning, educational articles, lists of toxic and less-toxic lilies, safer cut-flower options for pet owners, and other materials that you can download, print, or share on your clinic’s website and social media platforms.

Many plants are called “lilies.” Which ones are concerning?

Many plants have the word “lily” in the name and it can be confusing to determine which are toxic. The most dangerous lilies for cats are aster Lily Lily of the Valley those in the 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.). The toxin, which only effects cats, has not been identified, but exposure to any part of the plant, including leaves, flowers, pollen, or even the water from the vase may result in acute renal failure. Pancreatitis has also been reported but is considered rare. These ingestions are medical emergencies requiring immediate veterinary care. Early decontamination, aggressive intravenous fluid therapy, renal 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 renal failure. Due to the high risk of fatality, I recommend these flowers never be brought into homes with cats.

What about other plants called “lilies”? Are they dangerous too?

Although the *Lilium* and *Hemerocallis* are only toxic to cats, there other types of lilies which can be toxic to all species. More information about other troublesome lilies can be found at www.noliliesforkitties.com. Other dangerous “lily” plants include the lily of the valley (*Convallaria majalis*) and gloriosa or flame lily (*Gloriosa superba*). Lily of the valley contains cardenolides or digitalis like toxins which do not cause kidney failure, but may cause life-threatening cardiac arrhythmias and death when ingested by dogs or cats. Equally toxic to all animals is the gloriosa lily. The toxic agent is colchicine (toxic to rapidly dividing cells); the roots or tubers may contain enough toxins to cause serious multi-system organ failure in cats and dogs that chew on them. Early and aggressive therapy is generally needed when these plants are ingested.

www.petpoisonhelpline.com | 3600 American Boulevard W., Suite 725, Bloomington, MN 55431 | @petpoisonhelp

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 and will help to determine if the suspect lily is toxic. Tailored medical treatment and management advice will then be provided. As the most affordable animal poison control, the consultation fee of \$49 covers all follow-up calls from the pet owner or veterinary staff.

Thank you for helping to spread the “No Lilies for Kitties” message and keeping our feline friends safe this spring.

Best regards,

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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 \$49 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.