

## General advice

- Store products in their original containers, **out of sight and out of reach** of pets.
- Ensure storage cupboard doors are closed securely.
- Replace the tops of containers securely after use.
- Clean up spills promptly.
- If your pet is licking or chewing at their paws after walking on a treated lawn, try and wash their paws to prevent ingestion of any garden chemicals.
- At Easter do not leave Easter eggs or other chocolate products lying around.
- Take care during Easter egg hunts to prevent access.



## What to do if you think your pet has been poisoned

### EMERGENCY ADVICE

- Remove your pet from the source of poison.
- Do not try to make your pet vomit – NEVER give salt water.
- Contact your veterinary surgeon for advice - do not delay seeking advice even if your pet is well. Your vet will ask for details of what has happened.
- Collect the poison and take a sample, container or label with you if you are advised to take your pet to the practice.
- Remember to protect yourself and others.

Contact details for your vet:

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The Veterinary Poisons Information Service (VPIS) is a 24-hour telephone emergency service for veterinary professionals providing information on the management of actual and suspected poisoning in animals.



**VETERINARY POISONS  
INFORMATION SERVICE**



**PREVENTION OF POISONING IN PETS**

## Spring hazards



### **ADDER BITE**

The adder is the only native venomous snake in the UK. With the rise in temperature during the months of March and April the snakes emerge from hibernation. They are not aggressive but will bite if provoked. The venom can result in rapid swelling around the bite with pain, lethargy and collapse. There is also the risk of more severe signs. The adder is a protected species so leave it where it is and do not attempt to catch it – this is not allowed and is dangerous

### **CHOCOLATE**

Chocolate contains a chemical that dogs do not tolerate well. White chocolate is generally not a risk but milk chocolate and even a relatively small amount of dark chocolate can cause agitation, excitability, tremors, convulsions and heart problems. Easter eggs and other chocolate products are often very attractive to dogs.

### **FERTILIZERS**

Fertilizers, including bonemeal, are commonly used in spring and autumn and, although of relatively low toxicity, they can cause gastrointestinal upset and irritation to the skin.

### **HOT CROSS BUNS**

These contain raisins or sultanas. Ingestion of even a small quantity of dried fruit can cause severe kidney failure.

### **LAWN FEED, WEED AND MOSS KILLERS**

These generally contain fertilizers (see above), weed killers and ferrous sulphate (iron) to kill moss. All the chemicals are irritant and can cause gastrointestinal upset, and there is also the risk of iron poisoning which can result in severe gastrointestinal signs, shock and liver failure.



### **MUSHROOMS AND TOADSTOOLS**

Fungi produce their fruit bodies (mushrooms and toadstools) in the autumn when the weather is wet and mild. Some fungi cause gastrointestinal signs, while others can cause hallucinations and behavioural changes; however some are extremely toxic and can cause delayed kidney and liver failure. There are thousands of species and they can be difficult to identify without expert knowledge. If your pet has eaten a mushroom and there is some left, take photos of it (including photos showing where it is growing and the underneath of the mushroom, as there are features on the underside that are important for identification) and then dig it up and take it with your pet to your vet. If your pet vomits and there are remnants in the vomit – collect this, taking care to protect yourself. If you handle any suspect fungi ensure you wash your hands.

### **SPRING PLANTS**

Pets may chew or eat spring flowers that appear as the weather becomes warmer. These include snowdrops, crocus, daffodils and tulips which may be growing in the garden or be available in the home as cut flowers. In general these cause gastrointestinal upset and some animals may require treatment to control vomiting and replace lost fluids.

## Overview

As the weather gets warmer in the spring plants and fungi begin appearing and adders emerge from hibernation. Garden lawns may be treated with fertilizers and moss killers to improve their growth. Chocolate is also available in abundance around Easter.

This leaflet describes some of the potential hazards associated with this time of year.