

Household Dangers for Cats



When you take home a new kitty, it's always a good idea to pet-proof your living space and remove any household dangers for cats. Some hazards are fairly well-known, like anti-freeze and chocolate. Others might surprise you!

Choking/Ingesting Hazards:

String and string-like items (including thread, yarn, dental floss, rubber bands, and Christmas tree tinsel) are tempting to many cats—but they

can wreak havoc on the digestive system if swallowed. Legos and other small toys pose another hazard.

Plants:

You may have seen the infographics that get shared each year at Easter time warning about how lilies are dangerous for cats. It's true! Lilies can cause kidney failure and even death. They're not the only hazardous plant, though. It's always best to double check whether cut flowers and houseplants are poisonous before putting them within reach of your feline friends. The ASPCA maintains a helpful [database of toxic vs. non-toxic plants](#). (Note: even non-toxic plants sometimes cause tummy upset when eaten.)

Cleaning Products:

Most cleaning products are toxic if ingested, so be sure to follow the instructions on the label carefully. A solution of vinegar and water makes a good non-toxic alternative. (But don't let your kitty ingest vinegar, either. It's not good for feline tummies!) A diluted bleach solution also works well. ***Whatever product you use, follow directions, rinse items, let them dry, and ventilate to remove any fumes before your kitties get access!***

Human Food:

Many human foods are household dangers for cats. **Chocolate, caffeine, and alcohol** may be treats for people, but they're no good for kitties' health! Although it's a common belief that cats love milk, **dairy** can actually cause tummy distress. More dangerously, **Xylitol** (a common sweetener) is highly toxic and can cause liver failure. Xylitol shows up as an ingredient in more foods and household items than you might think (including gum and toothpaste). Be sure to check the ingredients carefully! The list goes on: **cooked bones** are a choking risk, and it's best to keep your kitty away from all **leftovers, compost, and garbage**. For a more detailed list of hazardous foods, check out the [Humane Society's blog](#).

Medications:

Even over-the-counter human medications like cold medicine and pain relievers can be very dangerous for animals. Make sure to store all your meds in a pet-proof place. Keep veterinary meds out of reach, too, so that your pets can't get into them and accidentally overdose. (Note: Marijuana and many other controlled substances can also cause poisoning in pets.)

Flea Treatments:

ALWAYS check with your veterinarian before treating your cat for fleas! Your vet can help you choose a safe product and determine the correct dosage. Pyrethroid-based flea treatments, which are available over-the-counter, can cause accidental poisoning and should be avoided.

Want to learn more about household dangers for cats?

- Visit the ASPCA's [Animal Poison Control website](#)
- Download the ASPCA's "Animal Poison Control Mobile App," which features a handy searchable list of hazards
- Read the Humane Society of the United States' article [Common Household Dangers for Pets](#).