General advice

- Store products in their original containers, **out of sight and out of reach** of pets.
- Dispose of unwanted medicines safely (return them to your pharmacy).
- Never give your pet a human medicine unless directed to do so by your vet.
- Ensure storage cupboard doors are closed securely.
- Replace the tops of containers securely after use.
- Clean up spills promptly.
- Store antifreeze products securely and safely.
- Do not allow your pet to drink fluid that has been drained from a vehicle radiator.
- If your pet is licking or chewing at their paws after walking on salted pavements in freezing weather, remove the rock salt by washing their paws after walking.

What to do if you think your pet has been poisoned

EMERGENCY ADVICE

- **Call Animal PoisonLine on 01202 509000 even if your pet is showing no signs to find out whether a trip to the vet is required.**
- **Remove your pet from the source of poison.**
- **Do not try to make your pet vomit – NEVER give salt water.**
- **Collect the poison and take a sample/ container with you if you are advised to take your pet to the vet practice.**

Animal POISONLine 24hr advice for owners

01202 509000

www.animalpoisonline.co.uk
24 hours a day (charges apply)

Veterinary Poisons Information Service

Animal PoisonLine is run by the VPIS, the UK's only animal poison centre, which has provided advice to vets on the management of poisoning in animals for over 25 years.

Animal POISONLine 24hr advice for owners

01202 509000

WINTER HAZARDS

PHOTO BY CHRIS BARNES - FLICKR

Overview

Chemicals, products and drugs used to deal with the cold weather may be harmful to pets. Ingestion of antifreeze, for example, can be fatal. In addition, Christmas may be particularly hazardous with large quantities of readily available food.

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

ANTIFREEZE

Ethylene glycol is a common ingredient in antifreeze. If ingested it can cause kidney failure and cats are at particular risk. The initial signs of toxicity can be subtle and easily missed and may not be apparent until hours after ingestion. There is an antidote for ethylene glycol poisoning but to be effective it must be started as soon as possible.

CHOCOLATE

Chocolate contains a chemical which dogs do not tolerate very well. White chocolate generally does not represent a risk but milk chocolate and even a relatively small amount of dark chocolate can cause agitation, excitability, tremors, convulsions and problems with the heart.

COUGH, COLD AND FLU TREATMENTS

There are many different types of products for the symptomatic relief of coughs, cold and flu symptoms. These include tablets, capsules, syrups and hot drinks. These products can contain a variety of different drug ingredients including decongestants, vitamins, painkillers (such as ibuprofen, paracetamol, aspirin), caffeine and antihistamines. If your pet has eaten one of these products it is important to know which one and the ingredients involved. Even products with the same brand name may contain different ingredients. Take the packaging and any remaining medicine with you to your vet if you need to go.

GRAPES AND THEIR DRIED FRUITS (SULTANAS, RAISINS, CURRANTS)

Grapes and their dried products (currants, sultanas and raisins) are toxic to dogs. Ingestion of even a small quantity can cause severe kidney failure. This will also include food items that contain dried fruits such as Christmas pudding, Christmas cake and mince pies.

ROCK SALT

Rock salt is the common name of halite, a rock containing salt (sodium chloride). It is used in winter to salt roads and paths, to lower the freezing temperature of water and melt ice thus making conditions less hazardous for road users and pedestrians. Excessive ingestion of salt can lead to a high sodium concentration in the blood. Pets that have walked on salted pavements may lick their feet and ingest a small quantity of rock salt. This could cause thirst, vomiting, diarrhoea and lethargy. Eating lumps of rock salt could lead to severe poisoning with convulsions and coma.

CHRISTMAS PLANTS

Holly, ivy and mistletoe may all be in the house over Christmas. These are not edible and as with any inedible plant material taken in quantity they might cause mild gastric upset.