

# Pets with Dr. Jyl

[KOVV 13 / PETS W/ DR. JYL / PETS TOPIC](#)

Dr. Jyl can be seen each Wednesday on the KOVR 13 News at Noon.

[POISON AWARENESS FOR PETS \(2/21/01\)](#)

Dr. Jyl stopped by Wednesday to discuss poisons and your pet. Assisting Doctor Jyl was Sherman, who really loved Bill Kelly.

Dogs and cats of all ages, and especially kittens and puppies, explore with their mouths. Dogs like to mouth and chew things. Cats may start to taste something and be unable to spit it out because of their rough tongues. Both may simply "dive in" when they see us doing something new or unfamiliar. These behaviors often land them in trouble. But we can do a lot to improve the odds.



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Always be prepared. Your animal may become poisoned in spite of your best efforts to prevent it. You should keep telephone numbers for your veterinarian, a local emergency veterinary service, and the ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center (1-888-4 ANI-HELP) in a convenient location. If you suspect that your pet has ingested something poisonous, seek medical attention immediately.

Our homes can contain a wide variety of potentially harmful compounds. The following is not a complete list, but indicates some of the most common problems.

## **Foods to Avoid:**

- Onions, onion powder
- Chocolate (baker's, semi-sweet, milk, dark)
- Alcoholic beverages
- Yeast dough
- Coffee (grounds, beans, chocolate covered espresso beans)
- Tea (caffeine)
- Salt
- Macadamia nuts
- Hops (used in home beer brewing)
- Tomato leaves and stems (green parts)
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- Rhubarb leaves
- Avocados (toxic to birds, mice, rabbits, horses, cattle, and dairy goats)
- Moldy foods



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**Medications:** Because they are so much smaller than we are, our companion animals need to be kept away from all medications. Cats, in particular, have a body chemistry quite different from ours in several important ways. Do not give any of your medications to a pet. That includes over-the-counter medications such as aspirin, ibuprofen, cough or cold medicines and decongestants. Do not give your dog's medicine to your cat or ferret. Be careful where you take your own medications. Make sure a pill does not drop within reach of a playful paw or quick, slurping tongue. Do not put your medications out on a table or counter to take later. They may not be there when later arrives.

**Plants:** Some house plants can be quite harmful if ingested by an animal. The ingestion of azalea, oleander, castor bean, sago palm, Easter lily or yew plant material by an animal can be fatal. Chewing on some plants may result in severe irritation to the mouth and throat. Others, while not quite so deadly, may cause a severe intestinal upset. You should know the names of all your plants, and keep any potentially toxic plants out of areas accessible to your animal companions. Outdoor plants can also be quite hazardous to your pets. Many plants, such as oleander, azalea, rhododendrons and Japanese yew, can affect the heart rhythm, possibly even causing it to stop. Some plants can cause considerable stomach upset with vomiting or diarrhea. Others can produce mental disturbances or confusion.

**Flea Control Products and Other Insecticides:** For many pets, fleas are a problem that make life miserable. When you treat a house to kill fleas or other insects, read the product label and follow all directions carefully. This is particularly important if a flea control product is to be applied directly to the pet. Before buying a flea product, consult your veterinarian, especially when treating sick, debilitated or pregnant pets. If you put out ant or roach baits, make sure they are in a spot inaccessible to your pet. Keep track of the baits and remove and dispose of them properly when they are no longer needed. Record on a calendar the date the bait was put out and the name of the bait used. This will be needed if your dog eats an entire bait container or if there was no label on the container and you need to tell the Center veterinarian what your pet ingested.

**Mouse and Rat Poisons:** If you put out mouse or rat baits, make sure they are in a spot that your pet cannot reach. Keep track of the baits and remove and dispose of them when they are no longer needed. Record on a calendar the date the bait was put out and the name of the bait used. This will be needed if your dog eats an entire bait container or if there was no label on the container and you need to tell the Center veterinarian what your pet ingested.



Car-cleaning products should be kept away from your pet, who will be safer if he or she is not allowed to "help" you clean your automobile.

**Household Chemicals:** Many household chemicals can be harmful if consumed by a companion animal. Most cleansing materials can cause stomach upset and vomiting if they are eaten. Dishwasher detergent can produce burns in the mouth. When using household chemicals, special care should be taken to make sure your pets cannot get into them. This may mean keeping your pet out of the room where you are using such materials. Common household items that can be lethal to an animal are mothballs, potpourri oils, coffee grounds, homemade play dough, fabric softener sheets, dishwashing detergent, batteries, cigarettes, and alcoholic drinks.

**Gardening and Lawn Care Supplies:** Please do not use garden or lawn care chemicals in the presence of your pet. For your own and your animal's safety, read and follow label directions carefully. Your pets should be kept off of a lawn treated with an insecticide or a weed killer at least until the lawn is completely dry. Your pet must be kept out of an area where snail or slug bait has been applied. Always store such products in areas that are inaccessible to your companion animals. Contact the manufacturer for information concerning product usage around your pets.

**Automobile Care Supplies:** Like indoor cleaners, car-cleaning compounds can cause stomach upset and vomiting. Some car-cleaning agents are stronger than those used indoors. Car-cleaning products should be kept away from your pet, who will be safer if he or she is not allowed to "help" you clean your automobile. Antifreeze and windshield washer fluid can be harmful to your pet. Your pet should not be allowed to drink water from a car radiator. As little as one teaspoon of antifreeze can be deadly to a cat; less than one tablespoon can be deadly to a 10-pound dog. Safer antifreeze products are now available and should be used.

**Miscellaneous Chemicals:** While performing construction, remodeling or repair work, keep pets out of the area until all equipment and materials have been put away. Keep pets away from fresh paint, varnish, or stains until these finishes have dried completely. If a pet comes in contact with paint or other finishes, DO NOT use paint thinners or paint removers to clean the animal. Contact the Center or your local veterinarian for removal instructions.

Information provided by the [ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center](#)