

CARE SHEET

Developed with and approved by a Qualified Veterinarian

A cat's curiosity can get her in a lot of trouble. As her owner it is your responsibility to make sure her environment in the house is free from harm.

How to Recognize Danger

When you look around your house you may think that everything looks perfectly safe. But you and your cat may have very different views on what could be a toy or a tasty snack. When you cat proof your house, try to see it in your cat's perspective. Hunker down to the height of your cat's line of sight and take a look at what your cat sees. Look around for any hidden dangers that your cat may get herself into. Simply use common sense and take the same precautions as you would with a child.

Common Chemical Dangers

Most of us have homes with many different types of toxic chemicals used for cleaning. Chemical poisoning most commonly occurs when cats:

- Drink a tainted substance
- Clean a toxic substance from their fur
- Eat a poisoned pest

Some items to watch out for include:

- Antifreeze that contains ethylene glycol has a sweet taste that attracts animals but is deadly if consumed.
- Chemicals used on lawns and gardens, such as fertilizer and plant food.
- Rodent poisons and insecticides are one of the most common sources of poisoning.
- De-icing salts used to melt snow and ice are paw irritants that can be poisonous if licked off.

Common Food Dangers

A cat's body is quite different from humans. Food items that are beneficial to a human can be toxic to cats. It is best to not feed your cat table scraps. A few items of note to keep in mind include:

- Chocolate, grapes and raisins are toxic to cats.
- Human medication such as painkillers, cold medicines, vitamins, diet pills and other medication can all be toxic to animals.
- Leftovers such as chicken bones easily shatter and can stab or choke a cat.

Common Household Item Dangers

Objects that seem harmless can become a danger to your cat if used improperly, or accidentally ingested. Some of the most attractive objectives to a cat can be the most dangerous. Aluminum foil, corks and balls of cellophane all are tremendously appealing to a cat, but can be a choking hazard. Some common items that can be hazardous include:

- String, yarn, rubber bands, coins and even dental floss are easy to swallow and can cause intestinal blockages or strangulations.
- Toys with removable parts (squeaky toys, or stuffed animals with plastic eyes, and ribbons) can pose a choking hazard to your cat. As a rule, always use toys no smaller than a ping-pong ball as a cat toy to avoid choking.
- Reclining chairs and other foldout furniture can be hazardous to your cat if she decides to crawl inside for a nap while someone pulls it out.
- Warm places like your dryer can be dangerous if left open, to a cat, this is may look like the perfect napping spot.
- Stuffed toys, if ripped apart can be dangerous.
- Ornamental plants that are poisonous to animals.

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**Household
Safety
Checklist**

Inside the home:

1. Yes () No () Make sure all doors, including patio entrances, are closed?
2. Yes () No () Make sure any pet door is the right size and closes properly?
3. Yes () No () Keep any dangerous food, such as chocolate, out of range of your cat?
4. Yes () No () Keep medication, dietary supplements and antibiotics high and safe?
5. Yes () No () Make sure all the garbage in the house is secure and inaccessible?
6. Yes () No () Check that all cleaning supplies are out of reach?
7. Yes () No () Keep all dangerous objects off the floor and out of reach?
8. Yes () No () Close the lid on the toilet bowl and stop using any sanitizing flush products?
9. Yes () No () Put away all sharp objects that might cut your cat's paws or mouth?
10. Yes () No () Put childproof latches on all cabinets containing hazardous substances so your cat can't 'slip' the latch?
11. Yes () No () Cat-proof any poisonous plants or place them where your cat can't get at them?
12. Yes () No () Pick up any toys, such as string, that could be dangerous if swallowed?
13. Yes () No () Place any pesticides out of reach or be doubly sure to replace them with nontoxic substances?
14. Yes () No () Make sure that hot stoves are covered and sharp items on kitchen counters are put away?
15. Yes () No () Make sure your cat has some toys to chew on so she doesn't try to chew electric wiring or other dangerous objects?

**What to do if
Your Cat is
Poisoned**

Keep a good cat emergency handbook and a first-aid kit in your home. Know how much your cat weighs, since treatments are often measured in proportion to the animal's weight.

If you think your cat has consumed any dangerous products, the first thing you must do is determine what substance is responsible. Read the product's label for the list of ingredients and for any instructions on accidental ingestion. Call your vet immediately. If your pet needs to make a trip to the vet, remember to take the product container in question with you to give your vet a better idea of what your pet may have ingested. You can also call the National Animal Poison Control Center.

Observe your cat's symptoms carefully. If she is vomiting or has diarrhea, you may want to take samples to the vet to help with diagnosis. The treatment will vary according to the poison, and whether it has been ingested, inhaled, or absorbed through the skin.

Note: The information on this Care Sheet is not a substitute for veterinary care. If you need additional information, please refer to the above sources or contact your veterinarian as appropriate.