

# Lilies Are Toxic to Cats

## PVMA FACT SHEET

Whether it's a holiday, a special occasion, or you're just excited that spring has sprung, if you're a cat owner, be very careful of the flowers you bring home. While you might not be able to resist the look and smell of fresh flowers in your home, your cat may not be able to resist taking a bite out of them and that can cause serious problems or even death.

### Cats and Lilies Don't Mix

Many forms of lilies are extremely poisonous to cats. Some of the most dangerous are known as the Tiger, Day, Asiatic, Easter, or Japanese show lily, resulting in acute kidney failure when eaten. Just 2-3 leaves or lily pollen groomed off the fur and ingested can be enough to poison your pet. While it won't cause kidney failure in dogs, ingesting enough will cause some stomach issues.

### Signs of Poisoning

Signs that your cat has ingested lilies can develop in 6-12 hours of exposure, and all parts of the plant including the stem are poisonous. The first signs of trouble include vomiting, lethargy, lack of appetite and dehydration. If left untreated, the symptoms can worsen as kidney failure develops (usually during 24 to 72 hours after ingestion) to include not urinating at all or too much, excessive thirst, tremors, seizures or disoriented behavior.

### Treatment

It's important to note that if you notice your plants have been nibbled or you see pollen on your cat, you should call your veterinarian or the Pet Poison Helpline immediately even if you do not notice strange symptoms in your cat yet. Waiting too long to seek treatment can result in death.

There is no antidote for lily ingestion in cats, so other measures must be taken to try and remove the toxins from the cat. Decontamination (ie: induced vomiting or giving activated

charcoal which binds the poison in the stomach) are necessary during the early toxic stage. Intravenous fluid therapy also improves the chances of your cat's survival. The earlier these fluids and organ monitoring begin, the better.

Other types of lilies like Peace, Calla, and Peruvian can also cause tissue irritation of the mouth, tongue, pharynx, and esophagus. Even if your cat has chomped on one of these lilies, take them and the plant to your veterinarian.

Most people don't realize that all species of lilies can be mildly poisonous or fatal to cats. If you're purchasing a bouquet for someone who has a cat in the household, hold off on including lilies. Even so, other forms of leaves and flowers can be toxic to pets so watch for stomach upset, vomiting, or diarrhea as an indication that your pet has ingested a portion of your flower arrangement.



Information courtesy of the Pet Poison Helpline—[www.petpoisonhelpline.com](http://www.petpoisonhelpline.com).



PENNSYLVANIA VETERINARY MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

advancing animal welfare and human health while ensuring the vitality of the profession