

## Springtime Hazards for Pets

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**Mold** - While mold occurs in many forms, the one we're most concerned with is the mold that can be found on walnuts that have been on the ground in this moist environment. This mold contains a toxin called "tremorogenic mycotoxin" which will adversely affect the nervous system. The symptoms you might see include the head bobbing from side to side like a mild palsy, and as the toxicity progresses we see serious muscle tremors that can lead to a full-blown seizure. Treatment consists of immediate decontamination of the stomach and drugs that help to control the tremors and seizures. This needs to happen a.s.a.p. so call if you notice any of these symptoms.

**Wild Mushrooms** – can often be found growing alongside non-toxic varieties. Identifying the toxic ones may be difficult unless you are a specialist. This time of year, mushrooms grow very fast so you want to check your yard often. When you find them, get rid of them. Wear gloves and make sure your dog(s) aren't around or they might get curious and try to help. If you think ingestion has occurred, contact your vet immediately and get the mushroom – cap and stem – and store it in a sealed plastic bag for later identification.

**Ethylene glycol** – better known as antifreeze is extremely toxic and unfortunately, tastes good, even to cats. If you know your pet has had any contact with it, time is of the essence, as you need to seek treatment a.s.a.p.

**Snail bait** – another commonly used toxin also known as metaldehyde. We know snails can ruin a garden, so if you must use snail bait, there is a non-toxic brand called "Slugo", which is an iron based bait and has very little toxicity, except if eaten in very large quantities.

**Pesticides and fertilizers** – Make sure that whatever you or your gardener uses is pet-friendly. Find out if a product needs to sit for a period of time after application before it becomes non-toxic. Dogs and cats may ingest products inadvertently by walking on a wet lawn or garden area and then cleaning themselves.

**Rodenticides** – Rat or mouse baits include poison but also ingredients designed to attract rodents which also happen to attract your pets. Life-threatening problems can result from ingestion of rodenticides including bleeding, seizures or damage to kidneys and other vital organs. If you use a rodenticide it must be placed in areas that are completely inaccessible to companion animals. Whatever products you or a professional company use, make sure you know what they are. Always save the label including the ingredients for just such an emergency.

**Standing water** – can be the source of two bacterial-derived diseases: Giardia and Leptospirosis. If you've ever done any hiking or camping, especially in more remote areas, you know not to drink water from any streams or standing water. Giardia causes diarrhea and sometimes vomiting which may become severe. Your pet may become dehydrated and very uncomfortable. Giardia is also a communicable as well as zoonotic meaning you can get it from other people or even from pets (if one were somehow exposed to feces). That same body of water may contain a bacteria that causes Leptospirosis which is life threatening. The bacteria comes from the urine of rodents and other wildlife. Call us to discuss the vaccine for Lepto. Meanwhile, keep your pets away from standing water, creeks or streams.

Excerpt from PetPrints, Spring, 2005