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Top 10 Human Medications Poisonous to Pets

From a January 7, 2010 article on Veterinary Practice News comes a warning for pet lovers about pets being poisoned by medications intended for humans. Justine A. Lee, DVM, DACVECC, associate director of veterinary services at Pet Poison Helpline reports that when it comes to pets being poisoned by medications, "they are unfortunately very, very common."

Surprising to most people is that human medications are the most common type of poisoning that animals are exposed to. On the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) website is listed the Top 10 Pet Poisons of 2008. The first item on the list is "human medications". The ASPCA notes that, "For several years, human medications have been number one on the ASPCA's list of common hazards."

The Veterinary Practice News article was more specific and listed the types of medications that are most commonly ingested by animals. These are:

1. NSAIDs (e.g. Advil, Aleve and Motrin)
2. Acetaminophen (e.g. Tylenol)
3. Antidepressants (e.g. Effexor, Cymbalta, Prozac, Lexapro)
4. ADD/ADHD medications (e.g. Concerta, Adderall, Ritalin)
5. Benzodiazepines and sleep aids (e.g. Xanax, Klonopin, Ambien, Lunesta)
6. Birth control (e.g. estrogen, estradiol, progesterone)
7. ACE Inhibitors (e.g. Zestril, Altace)
8. Beta-blockers (e.g. Tenormin, Toprol, Coreg)
9. Thyroid hormones (e.g. Armour desiccated thyroid, Synthroid)

10. Cholesterol lowering agents (e.g. Lipitor, Zocor, Crestor)

The ASPCA reported that they receive **over 50,000 calls per year on pets being poisoned by medications**. They warn that, "Pets often snatch pill vials from counters and nightstands or gobble up medications accidentally dropped on the floor."