

What to do if your dog eats a houseplant

If you're a pet owner, chances are you've had to deal with your dog getting into something they shouldn't. One common issue that many dog owners face is their dogs eating plants. Whether it's houseplants or outdoor garden plants, curious dogs can't resist taking a bite.

But what should you do if your dog eats plants? Here are 5 key steps to take to ensure your pooch's safety.

Step 1: Determine if the plant is toxic to your pet

First, identify the plant your dog ate to check for toxicity and related symptoms. Useful resources such as an AI identification app can help in these instances.

It also helps to know what plants you have in your home and garden (and their level of toxicity) as well as familiarise yourself with common culprits such as members of the lily or philodendron families or berries of the New Zealand native, the karaka tree.

Step 2: Contact your vet

If you are worried that your pet consumed a toxic houseplant, it's important to consult your vet or the Animal Poisons Helpline (0800 869 738) for expert advice on managing the situation. They can advise on symptoms to watch for and suggest bringing your dog in for additional treatment if needed.

Step 3: Monitor for any symptoms

1. Vomiting and diarrhoea
2. Weakness, tremors, or unsteadiness
3. Excessive drooling
4. Loss of appetite

Step 4: Collect plant information

Be prepared to share the following information with your vet:

1. The name and photo of the plant, if possible
2. The amount ingested
3. How long ago the ingestion occurred
4. Any symptoms your dog is exhibiting

Step 5: Monitor behaviour

Quickly spotting any signs and acting fast can really boost the chances of a good outcome. Here's what to watch for:

1. **Alertness levels:** Is your dog showing signs of being unusually lethargic, or are they displaying signs of being overly active or irritable?
2. **Eating and drinking habits:** Keep an eye out for any changes in their usual eating and drinking behaviour. Increases or decreases to these habits should be investigated by your vet.
3. **Breathing changes:** If your furry friend is breathing fast or struggling to breathe, it might be a sign that they need urgent veterinary attention.