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How Many Pets Are Poisoned by Lawn Pesticides?

A new Website allows veterinarians to report and track pesticide poisonings so dogs, cats and other pets can be better protected.



Dogs and cats may be more vulnerable to pesticide poisoning than their human companions. After all, they nose around close to the ground, where lawn and garden pesticides may linger, and they lick themselves clean afterward. Beyond that, many pets are dosed with flea and tick repellents and powders.

All of which means that dogs, cats and other pets may be at risk of chemical poisoning and other health problems that come from exposure to pesticides. While veterinarians have been aware of the issue, a [new American Veterinary Medical Association Website](#) makes reporting cases — and hopefully, identifying the most risky chemicals and uses — much easier, according to [Beyond Pesticides](#), a group that

advocates for eliminating the use of pesticides.

The National Pesticide Information Center developed the AVMA Website, with help from the Environmental Protection Agency's Pesticide Program.

Here's how the Beyond Pesticides blog describes the risk from pesticides to pets, and resources available to pet owners:

Numerous studies have documented the risk of pesticides to pets over the years. A 1991 National Cancer Institute study, finds that dogs whose owners' lawns were treated with 2,4-D, four or more times per year, are twice as likely to contract canine malignant lymphoma than dogs whose owners do not use the herbicide. Exposure to herbicide-treated lawns and gardens increases the risk of bladder cancer by four to seven times in Scottish Terriers, according to a study by Purdue University veterinary researchers published in the April 15, 2004 issue of the Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association. Research published in the December

1988 issue of Preventive Veterinary Medicine links hyperthyroidism in cats to flea powders and sprays, lawn pesticides and canned cat food. Allethrin, a common ingredient in home mosquito products (coils, mats, oils and sprays) and other bug sprays, has been linked to liver problems in dogs, according to a 1989 study by the World Health Organization. The 1989 edition W.C. Campbell Toxicology textbook reports that chronic exposure to abamectin, an insecticide often used by homeowners on fire ants can affect the nervous system of dogs and cause symptoms such as pupil dilation, lethargy, and tremors. According to 2004 statistics compiled by the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals' Animal Poison Control Center, 22% of approximately 880 cases of pet birds being exposed to common household items involved pesticides (including rat bait and insecticides....

If you suspect your pet has been poisoned, contact the [ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center](#) at 888-426-4435. Encourage your veterinarian to document the pesticide poisoning through the new [AVMA Website](#). To be sure the incident does not go undocumented, complete Beyond Pesticides' [Pesticide Incident Report](#) (pdf).

For more information on how your pet may be poisoned, what pesticides do to pets, and alternative pest management strategies for your home and pet pest problems, see Beyond Pesticides fact sheet [Pesticides and Pets: What you should know to keep your pets safe](#) (pdf).

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