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Household toxins: Tylenol & Snail Bait

There are several toxic compounds around your house that you need to know about. I will discuss several of these in each newsletter.

Tylenol:

Tylenol or acetaminophen is an over the counter anti-inflammatory used safely in people. This medication can cause some severe problems in dogs, and just one dose can be fatal to cats. It causes a severe anemia, vomiting, depression, coma, and death. If your cat accidentally ingests some, please come in immediately, and if we are closed, go to an emergency clinic. A dog can usually be ok if they eat one tablet, but higher doses can cause the same signs as cats and should be treated aggressively. It is good advice that not to give a drug that has not been prescribed or recommended by your veterinarian, as medications have much different effects between different species. Tylenol is a good example of this.

Snail Bait:

Snail bait is an extremely toxic and extremely tasty substance. The active ingredient in most snail baits is called metaldehyde. It causes severe muscle tremors, fever, seizures, and death. If your pet ingests some (and if you leave it out, they will), then they need an immediate forced vomiting to remove the contents before the compound is absorbed. If we are closed, go to an emergency clinic. Snail bait is very tasty to dogs and cats, so even leaving it buried or hidden in plants could cause a fatality. I recommend an alternate form of snail control. You can use insecticidal soaps labeled for snails. There is also snail bait made with iron phosphate tablets. This is a much safer product to use, as ingestion may only cause vomiting or diarrhea but not the fatal muscle tremors.