

# Lily Poisoning

Members of the *Lilium* and *Hermerocallis* genera are toxic to cats. This includes: Easter lilies, Day lilies, Tiger lilies and Stargazer lilies, Rubrum Lilies, Japanese Show Lilies and Asiatic Lilies. Other "lily" plants such as Peace lilies or lily-of-the-valley, do not cause the kidney injury associated with members of *Lilium* and *Hemerocallis*, although some of these plants are toxic in their own right (lily-of-the-valley is toxic to the heart).

All parts of the lily including the stem, leaves, petals, stamens and pollen are poisonous to cats. Kittens are especially prone because they like to explore and chew many things in their environment. Older cats might just get some pollen on their paws or coat, then ingest the pollen as they groom their fur later.

Lilies cause acute kidney failure in cats only a few hours after ingesting lily parts. Many cats vomit after chewing or eating parts of a lily. However, if a cat has been exposed to a lily outdoors, the family may be unaware of the exposure.

Cats are extremely sensitive to lily poisoning. While the exact toxin is still unidentified, cats who are not treated immediately develop acute renal failure and die, generally within 3-6 days. Cats with acute renal failure typically show vomiting, depression, reduced appetite or complete loss of appetite and dehydration. Lab tests will show increases in urea, creatinine, phosphorous and potassium. The urine contains casts, protein, glucose and is very dilute.

Cats who have been seen near lilies, as well as those who have definitely ingested any part of a lily, should be seen by us immediately. Cats who are treated within 18 hours of exposure to a lily generally recover. However, in cases where treatment is delayed, the prognosis is generally poor and many cats are euthanised. Even if a cat has survived lily poisoning, it can still be left with chronic renal problems or pancreatitis.

Your cat will receive intravenous fluids in the hospital for approximately 48 hours. Lab test will be done when your cat is admitted to the hospital and will be repeated in 24 and 48 hours. There may be ongoing treatment necessary. Cats who receive treatment within 18 hours of exposure generally do ok. Cats who are treated later typically do not survive, even with aggressive therapy.

Do not keep lilies in your garden or in the house!