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## LILY POISONING

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I just returned from a conference on diseases of the urinary tract of dogs and cats, and the speaker emphasizes the need for greater public awareness of the effect of Lilies on cats. It turns out that only the smallest amount ingested is poisonous to cats and causes the kidneys to stop working. If untreated this often means death for the cat.

Peak incidence of poisoning occurs during Christmas and Easter holidays as these plants are holiday ornamentals. Lilies that are poisonous to cats include Day, Easter, Rubrum, Stargazer, and Tiger. All Liliium or Hemerocallis species should be considered poisonous. All parts of the plant are toxic including the pollen. Neither Lily of the Valley nor Peace Lily are true lilies and do not cause kidney failure in cats.

Clinical signs of poisoning may be unremarkable if the ingestion is recent. Loss of appetite, vomiting, and loss of energy may be seen. As the disease progresses, dehydration, vocalizing, drooling, tremors, weakness and seizures may be seen. Signs develop between 2 hours and 5 days, with acute kidney failure developing within 36 to 72 hours after ingestion.

If the doctor suspects lily poisoning, intravenous fluids should be started and tests run on the blood and urine. Fluids should be continued for at least 2 days and kidney function monitored. If treatment is started within 18 hours of ingestion, before the onset of kidney failure, the prognosis is good. If kidney failure has started before treatment, the prognosis is guarded to poor.

My best advice is to not have lilies in the cat environment. When choosing plants for the house and yard, consider their potential to be poisonous and make sure you pick safe plants. Ask your gardener or veterinarian if you need to know which plants are safe.