

Keep cats away from Easter lilies

April 14 2014, by Rushmie Nofsinger

Emergency Room veterinarians at the Foster Hospital for Small Animals at the Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine at Tufts University are warning pet owners that Easter lilies can cause kidney failure – and often death – in otherwise healthy cats. Tiger lilies, Japanese Show lilies and various day lilies can also harm cats in the same way.

All vegetative parts of lilies, including the flowers, stems and leaves are toxic to [cats](#), according to Elizabeth Rozanski, D.V.M., associate professor at the Cummings School and an expert in emergency and critical care.

Symptoms of poisoning include vomiting, loss of appetite and depression, and can occur as soon as two hours after the cat has eaten the plant, said Rozanski. Treatment must be administered within a few hours after the cat has eaten the plant in order to prevent kidney failure and/or death.

While the cat may stop vomiting within 12 hours after eating the plant, it may continue to suffer from anorexia, dehydration and depression as the toxic substance in the lily causes [kidney damage](#). The result is kidney failure and often death.

"If you suspect that your cat has eaten vegetative parts of the lily plant or if it has any of these symptoms, go to your local veterinarian immediately," advised Rozanski. "Your veterinarian may administer an emetic to make your cat vomit the plant material, followed by intravenous fluid therapy for several days to prevent kidney failure.

Once kidney failure from lily toxicity has occurred, it usually cannot be reversed."

Cats suffering from lily-induced [kidney failure](#) may need a [kidney transplant](#) to survive. Hemodialysis is another option for cats suffering from [renal failure](#). Both options are costly and may cause complications.

The best ways to protect cats when lily [plants](#) are in bloom are to move the plants out of cats' reach, keep cats indoors, and, if indoor restriction isn't possible, closely monitor their outdoor activity. Better yet, ask if the florist can create a "cat-safe" arrangement.

Provided by Tufts University

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