



DANGERS TO YOUR PET

There are of course many dangers to your pets and this article does not represent a definitive list but is intended only as a guide to some of the dangers here in Spain. You should contact a vet immediately if you suspect your pet has come into contact with any of the following and is showing symptoms.

Processionary Caterpillars



your pet should come into contact with their very toxic hairs, it can be fatal. There are a number of useful websites offering information and advice but the best advice is to keep well away from the area. If you are unfortunate enough to have pine trees in your garden with these nests, we would advise that you consult an expert on how to deal with them rather than try yourself. Even inhaling dust from the infected tree can cause lung damage. They are lethal to animals and dangerous to humans.

These caterpillars are prevalent in Andalucia and we cannot stress enough how dangerous they are. They build their nests in pine trees and hatch anytime from December to March. That is when they leave the nest in a procession (hence the name) and if



If you suspect your pet has been in contact with them you should seek immediate emergency vet treatment. The symptoms will display very quickly, they run around, desperately scratching themselves in the mouth and on the tongue, dribble and foam from the mouth, and rapidly a visible swelling of tongue, lips and even the whole head occurs, difficulty in breathing and/or white spots on the mouth or tongue. It is important to get to the vets as

quickly as possible as your pet will need cortisone treatment, antibiotics and lots of intravenous fluids.

TOADS

Toads are dangerous amphibians. They are a common cause of poisoning in dogs and, less commonly, they can poison cats.



There are 7 types of Toads that can be found in Andalusia, all of which are poisonous, but the 'true toads' of the Bufo family are generally considered to be the most toxic.

Toads range in size from 2-25 cm (1-10 inches). Toads exude a milky white toxin mostly from poison glands behind their eyes, but elsewhere on their body as well. They

squeeze this poison onto the surface of their skin when they are under threat.

When treated roughly, they can even squirt the poison up to 2 metres. Dogs and cats are poisoned when they mouth the toad or sometimes when the toad's poison gets into their eyes.

Toads are more likely to be seen at night and in wet weather conditions.

Signs of Toad Poisoning

Due to its corrosive and irritant nature, the toad's venom will cause profuse salivation soon after your pet bites it. Pets affected by the irritant venom will paw their mouth due to the pain. If you see your pet drooling and distressed but haven't seen it attack a toad, look at its gums. If they are red and inflamed, toad poisoning is likely. Vomiting often occurs, especially in cats. Cats also show hindquarter weakness and a fixed trance-like stare. If your dog is poisoned, it will usually suffer from seizures or convulsions. These convulsions are often fatal unless you seek urgent vet attention. If the dog is having a seizure handle it with caution, the dog may not recognize its owner and could unknowingly bite. The poison can also affect the heart of dogs and cats, causing immediate cardiac arrest.

What to Do If You Suspect Toad Poisoning?

If you suspect a toad has poisoned your pet, you will have a good chance of saving its life with this additional prompt action. It is vital to get prompt treatment for your pet.

- Transport the dog to a vet as quickly and quietly as possible. Try to be at your veterinary surgery within 15 minutes as this can make a life saving difference.
- Keep your pet cool (as they overheat when convulsing) and gently restrained.
- If it is convulsing it can damage itself by knocking against objects - try to gently restrain your pet by wrapping it in a towel.
- After it has mouthed a toad, it is vital that you remove all traces of the poison from your pets' teeth and gums. To do this, use a jet of water from a hose to remove the toxin and rinse out the dogs mouth vigorously, no matter how much they protest. It will save their life! . The water jet should be directed forward out of your pet's mouth, not down into its throat. Also rubbing the teeth and gums with a soft cloth containing human toothpaste may help to remove the toxin.

Canine Leishmaniasis

This is transmitted by bites from the Phlebotomine Sandfly Mosquito. Contrary to their name sandflies are also found in inland areas away from beaches and can bite a dog up to 100 times an hour during the sand fly season. Your pet dog needs protection, otherwise it can be in serious danger. You can purchase a special collar that repels the sand flies and there are various types available from your vet.

See our separate Fact Sheet on Spanish Dogs and Leishmaniasis for a detailed explanation and information on protection and treatment.

Scorpions

Scorpions are common in Spain and all domestic animals can be stung if too curious. Although not dangerous, the sting is extremely painful to your pet.

Plants

It is important to take care that your pet does not eat some species of plants that are commonly found throughout the Mediterranean and particularly in Spain. Here are some of the most common and poisonous plants to be found in your typical Spanish garden. There are of course many more, too many to list here. Contact your vet for advice or treatment immediately if you think your pet has eaten any of the following plants and is showing a bad reaction.



fumes are also toxic.

Adelfa - Nerium oleander

Being particularly drought resistant, Adelfa (Oleander) is found throughout Spain. It is an increasingly common sight along motorways in Southern Spain. The flowers can be red, white, pink or yellow. All parts of the plant are highly toxic and particular care should be taken when pruning as the sap is particularly dangerous. Do not burn the prunings as the

Datura - Angel's Trumpets

Another common sight across Spain are Angel's Trumpets, commonly known as Datura. A beautiful plant with white or pink flowers. It is also a member of the age-old "witches weeds" along with deadly nightshade, henbane and mandrake. The seeds and leaves are the most toxic part, although, most parts of the plants contain toxic hallucinogens.



Calla Lily - Zantedeschia

A very common plant found throughout the Mediterranean and all over Spain. Originally from South Africa, it is beautiful plant that flowers in late winter or early Spring, then dies down until the following year. Its leaves are toxic.

Lantana - Verbenaceae

The Lantana plants are drought resistant and extremely colourful, with a mix of orange, red, yellow, blue and white florets. The berries and leaves are toxic.



The Castor Oil Plant - Ricinus Communis

The Castor oil plant is found all over the Mediterranean region and is particularly toxic to humans and animals. All parts of the plant are dangerous. However, the flowers at the top contain little pods, there are three seeds within each pod, these seeds are particularly lethal, containing high

concentrations of Ricin.

Wisteria - Fabaceae

Extremely popular as ornamental plants across Asia, Wisteria is ideally suited to the Mediterranean climate. All parts of the plant are toxic if consumed, but, the pods and the seeds are the most dangerous parts.



Heliotrope

Can be blue or white it has highly toxic leaves if ingested and can cause total liver destruction.

Iris can be blue, white or yellow and it is the underground rhizomes (bulbs) that are highly poisonous and deadly to animals and humans if ingested.



Poisoning

It is of course illegal to use poisons with intent to harm animals but it still happens. Be vigilant.

Take extra care when walking your dog, as some have died after eating poisoned food in rural areas.

Poisoned bait (e.g. meat laced with strychnine) is laid in some areas by hunters and poachers to control natural predators such as foxes.

Poisons are also laid in some urbanisations to keep down the feral cat population.

Many insecticides used on weeds, crops etc. are poisonous to our pets. If you suspect your pet has come into contact with insecticide, perhaps sniffing a grass verge while out on a walk, seek immediate vet treatment.

Never 'watch and wait' in any case of suspected poisoning. If you suspect your pet has been poisoned, act fast and contact a vet immediately for advice and treatment. Inform the vet when, where and how poisoning occurred. If possible, take the packaging, plant or substance to the vet.

Keep your pet away from any other animals to avoid cross contamination.

