

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ST. VALENTINE'S DAY FAVORITES CAN BE DEADLY FOR PETS

CHICAGO, IL February, 12, 2014...Did you know that two favorite St. Valentine's Day gifts can be deadly for pets?

The veterinarians at Chicago Veterinary Emergency & Specialty Center (www.ChicagoPetEmergency.com) remind pet owners that chocolate and lilies can pose a serious danger to dogs and cats and even lead to their death. It's important that pet owners stay aware of the danger not only on St. Valentine's Day, but in the days following.

Chocolate & Dogs: Many dogs seem to have a sweet tooth and will eat any chocolate they can reach. Ingestion of even small amounts of chocolate by a dog can do more than cause diarrhea or vomiting. The cocoa in chocolate contains theobromine, a chemical that can prove fatal to dogs. Chocolate poisoning can lead to tremors, high blood pressure, increased heart rate, seizures, heart failure and even death.

The darker the chocolate, the greater the concentration of theobromine and the greater the danger to pets.

If a pet consumes even a small amount of **baking chocolate** or **cocoa** (used in cakes and other sweet treats), or **dark chocolate** candy, it should be considered a medical emergency.

Milk chocolate, depending on the amount consumed, can also present a serious health hazard requiring immediate medical care.

White chocolate contains the least amount of theobromine of any chocolate, but can still be toxic to pets.

Prompt veterinary treatment for a dog that has eaten chocolate can increase its chances of achieving a full recovery. Chocolate is also a danger for cats, but because they are more particular about what they eat, they are far less likely to consume chocolate than are dogs.

Lilies & Cats: While many flowers and plants can be dangerous to pets, lilies are one flower that is especially toxic for cats. All parts of all lily plants are extremely toxic to cats and can be fatal.

Stargazer lilies, day lilies and tiger lilies are among the more common lilies found in flower arrangements. Each can be deadly to a cat that chews the leaves or ingests any part of the flower, including the stem, leaves, petals or pollen. Lily ingestion by cats can lead to acute renal failure and death. Although there is no antidote, prompt treatment with intravenous fluids and other medical support can help save your cat.

Some types of lily can also present a danger to dogs, but less so than to cats.

Pet owners with any concern that their cat or dog has ingested chocolate or lilies should immediately contact:

- their veterinarian
- Chicago Veterinary Emergency & Specialty Center (1-773-281-7110)
- Pet Poison Helpline (1-800-213-6680)
- ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center (1-888-426-4435)

About Chicago Veterinary Emergency and Specialty Center

www.ChicagoPetEmergency.com

Staffed by highly-trained specialists and equipped with the latest technology, Chicago Veterinary Emergency & Specialty Center is always open – 24 hours each day, every day of the year.

Chicago's oldest and largest pet emergency facility, the Chicago Veterinary Emergency & Specialty Center provides advanced emergency, critical and specialty care for cats and dogs.

Each year, the center treats more than 11,000 cats and dogs in its emergency room and thousands more are cared for by veterinary specialists.

In addition to emergency veterinarians and staff, the facility offers board-certified veterinarians who specialize in cardiology, dentistry, dermatology, diagnostic imaging, internal medicine, neurology, oncology, ophthalmology and surgery. This state-of-the-art facility includes ultrasound and MRI equipment, specialized surgical suites, a blood bank, specialized oxygen cages, heart monitors and more. Chicago Veterinary Emergency & Specialty Center has been providing emergency care for cats and dogs since 1978.

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