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Lilies

Lilies are commonly used in floral arrangements. Did you know your cat could be poisoned by that lovely gift?

Indoor cats will often be interested in flower arrangements. They may play with or chew part of the plants. Cats like to chew on grass and indoor cats may be drawn to chewing on the closest or only available plant in the house.



All parts of the lily plant are poisonous to cats, flowers, leaves, stems and roots. Only a very small amount eg just licking or mouthing the plant can be toxic. The toxic ingredient has not yet been identified. Cats get severe kidney disease and if not treated will die in 3-7 days. Dogs are not affected in the same way, they only get a mild tummy upset with vomiting and diarrhoea.

The first sign of a cat being affected are easily misinterpreted as minor. There may be loss of appetite and vomiting and your cat will be subdued and depressed. After 12hrs they sometimes seem to improve as their gut feels better and then they deteriorate with acute kidney failure. Some cats drink excessively, some will salivate (drool), they may hide, may not eat, sometimes will vomit and may be depressed. But most don't show many signs.

Your cat needs to get to a vet asap. If you realise there is a problem within 24hrs your cat can usually be saved. They will need to go on an intravenous drip to have fluids to rehydrate and flush their kidneys. If you get your cat to a vet within 2 hours of eating the plant, they will have their stomach emptied, but otherwise your vet can give charcoal to limit absorption of the toxin. Your vet will get samples of blood and urine to check for kidney disease. Acute kidney failure can be successfully treated, if treatment starts early enough. Your cat will be in hospital on a drip for several days. There is no specific test that can identify lily toxicity so your being aware of the risk is important.

You could save your cats life by being aware. Advise your vet if your cat may have had access to any poison. Take a sample of the poison if you can with you to the vet.

