



**ONE HEALTH GLOBE**

# Lily Toxicity in Cats: A Life-Threatening Danger Every Cat Owner Must Know

Symptoms, First Signs and Emergency Treatment Guide

**WARNING: Even a small exposure can be fatal**

**All parts of the plant are toxic - petals, leaves, pollen, stems, and vase water**

Licking pollen from fur, nibbling a leaf, or drinking water from a vase can trigger acute kidney injury in cats. This guide helps pet owners identify risky lilies, spot the first signs fast, and understand why immediate veterinary care matters.

# What Makes Lilies Toxic to Cats?

Why speed matters

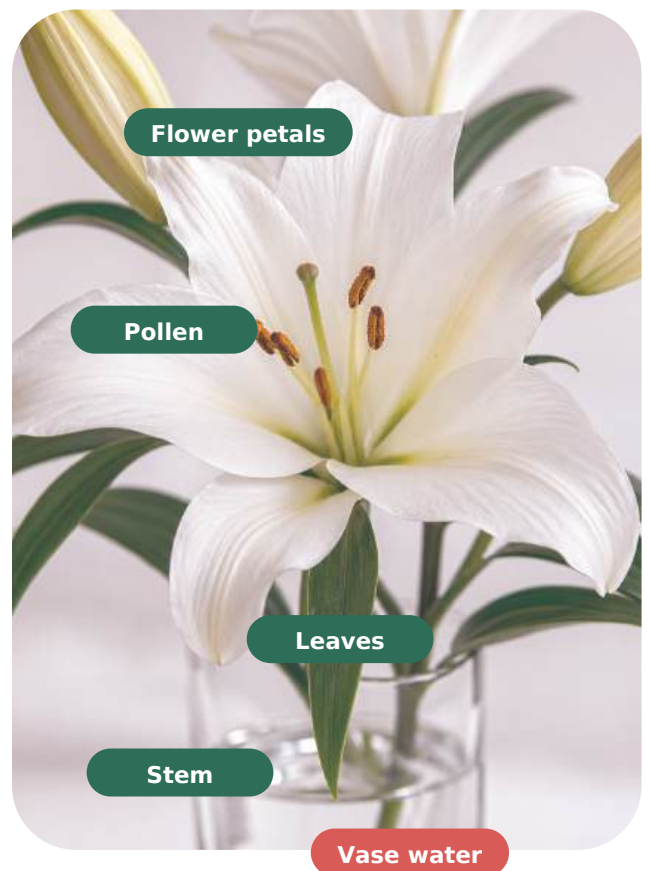
True lilies and daylilies can cause acute kidney failure in cats. The exact toxin has not been identified, but veterinary toxicology sources agree that even tiny exposures can severely damage the kidneys.

## Why cats get into trouble

Pollen can land on a cat's coat and get swallowed during grooming. Cats can also chew leaves, mouth petals, brush against stamens, or sip vase water.

## No safe amount

If exposure is possible, do not wait to "see what happens." Early treatment often begins before symptoms look dramatic.



Key message: treat every part of a lily arrangement as dangerous around cats, including loose pollen and water left in the vase.

# Types of Toxic Lilies

Visual identification

If you are unsure, treat all lilies as dangerous and keep them out of reach until a veterinarian confirms otherwise.



## Easter Lily

Common in spring bouquets and holiday displays. White trumpet-shaped blooms on a tall stem.

Toxic to cats



## Asiatic Lily

Often sold in vivid orange, pink, or red shades. Showy blooms with prominent stamens.

Toxic to cats



## Day Lily

Garden favorite with strappy leaves and flared blooms. Also unsafe for cats.

Toxic to cats

## Plant ID tip

True lilies (genus *Lilium*) and daylilies (genus *Hemerocallis*) are the high-risk group for cats. Peace lilies and calla lilies are different plants, but it is still safest to avoid lily-named plants in cat homes unless you know exactly what they are.

# First Signs of Lily Poisoning

Early window: 0 to 12 hours

The first signs can look deceptively mild. A cat may vomit once, hide, seem quiet, or stop eating. That is still enough reason to head to the vet.

## Common early signs

- Vomiting
- Drooling
- Loss of appetite
- Lethargy or unusual hiding



Healthy behavior on the left, sick behavior on the right.

### 0-12 hours

- Vomiting
- Drooling
- Quiet or withdrawn

### 12-24 hours

- Dehydration
- Worsening weakness
- Urgent kidney injury

### 24-72 hours

- Kidney failure risk
- Little or no urine
- Life-threatening crisis

Do not wait for stage 2. Cats treated early have the best chance of avoiding irreversible kidney damage.

# Lily Toxicity Symptoms by Stage

Progression chart

Symptoms often move from stomach upset to dehydration and kidney failure within a short window. The chart below is for recognition, not for home monitoring.

## Early

# 1

- Vomiting
- Drooling
- Loss of appetite
- Lethargy

## Intermediate

# 2

- Dehydration
- Weakness
- Increased thirst
- Changes in urination

## Severe

# 3

- Kidney failure
- No urine production
- Collapse
- Seizures or death

### What this means

A cat can look only mildly ill at first and still be in real danger. Once kidney failure sets in, treatment becomes more difficult, more expensive, and less predictable.

**First signs of lily poisoning in cats: vomiting, drooling, low appetite, and lethargy**

# Emergency Treatment Guide

Act now

**ACT FAST - THIS IS A MEDICAL EMERGENCY**

If you think your cat touched, chewed, brushed against, or groomed pollen from a lily plant, treat it like an emergency even before symptoms appear.

**1**

## **Remove your cat from the plant**

Take away the bouquet or move your cat to another room.

**2**

## **Stop more exposure**

If pollen is on the coat, keep your cat from grooming and wipe visible dust gently with a damp cloth on the way to care.

**3**

## **Call a veterinarian now**

Tell them it may be lily exposure so treatment can start fast.

**4**

## **Go in immediately**

Do not wait for vomiting, and do not try home remedies unless a veterinarian specifically tells you to.

## **Emergency contacts**

ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center: (888) 426-4435 | Pet Poison Helpline: (855) 764-7661

# What Veterinary Treatment Usually Looks Like leaving, but urgent

Veterinarians treat lily toxicity aggressively because the kidneys can deteriorate fast. Your cat may look better before the kidneys are truly safe, which is why monitoring matters.

## 1. Immediate assessment

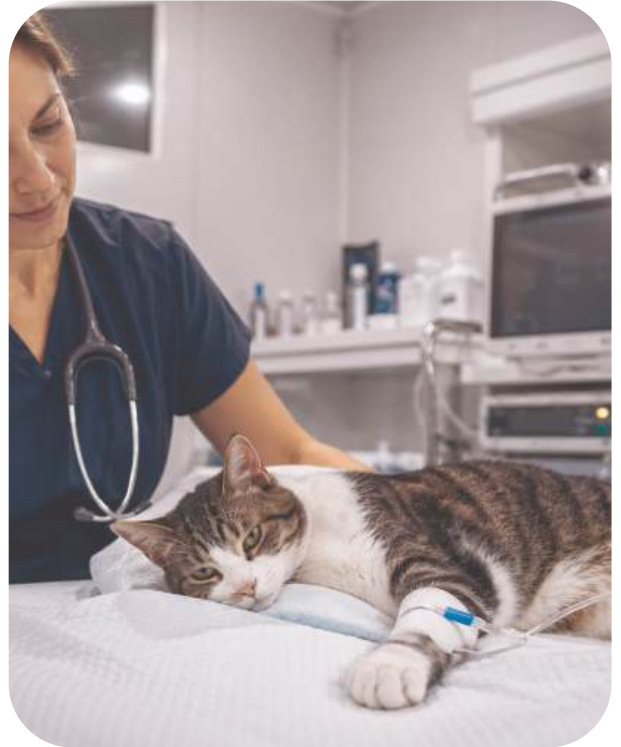
The team may ask what type of lily was involved, when exposure happened, and whether your cat vomited or groomed pollen.

## 2. Kidney protection

IV fluids are commonly started to support circulation and reduce the chance of severe kidney injury.

## 3. Monitoring

Blood work, urine output, and repeated kidney values help the team judge whether treatment is working.



**Treatment within the first 18-24 hours offers the best chance of a good outcome**

Some cats need 24 to 72 hours of hospital care. Ask your veterinarian what to watch for after discharge and when rechecks are needed.

## Prevention Tips

Make your home bouquet-safe

The safest choice is simple: do not keep lilies in a home with cats. Prevention works better than any emergency response.

- ✓ Skip lilies in bouquets, centerpieces, and sympathy arrangements.
- ✓ Read flower labels before bringing arrangements indoors.
- ✓ Tell family, florists, and delivery senders that your home is lily-free.
- ✓ Check porches, patios, and gardens for daylilies and other risky lily plants.
- ✓ Choose cat-safer flowers like roses, sunflowers, orchids, or snapdragons instead.

## Do Not Keep Lilies If You Have Cats

One accidental bouquet can become an emergency visit within hours.

# Quick Reference Guide

Fast scan summary

Use this page as a rapid reminder. It is not a substitute for urgent veterinary care.

Stage	What you may notice	What it means	Action
Exposure only	Cat near lilies, pollen on coat, chewed plant, or drank vase water	A medical emergency may be starting before symptoms show	Go now
0-12 hours	Vomiting, drooling, low appetite, hiding, lethargy	Early toxic response	Go now
12-24 hours	Weakness, dehydration, worsening illness	Kidney injury may be developing	Emergency
24-72 hours	Little or no urine, collapse, severe illness	Kidney failure risk	Critical care

## Remember

Any possible lily plant cat toxicity should be treated as urgent, even when the cat still seems mostly normal.

## What to say when you call

Tell the clinic there may be lily plant cat toxicity, when exposure likely happened, what the plant looked like, and whether your cat vomited or groomed pollen.



Scan for ASPCA lily toxicity reference. Medical references reviewed for this guide include ASPCA, UC Davis School of Veterinary Medicine, and FDA consumer safety guidance on lilies and cats.

If your cat may have been exposed, contact a veterinarian or animal poison service immediately.