



LILIES– and why they are deadly to your cat

It is a little known fact amongst cat owners that lilies are **deadly** to cats.

All parts of a lily (including the pollen) contain a toxin which if ingested by a cat will almost certainly cause death through acute kidney failure 3 to 5 days after exposure.

Because of their natural curiosity, most cats (and especially kittens) will investigate, sniff and touch new plants brought into the home. When lily pollen gets onto the coat of the cat (even by accidentally brushing against the plant) it will attempt to lick it off and by so doing will almost certainly be sealing its own death. Vomiting usually occurs between 6 to 12 hours after ingestion, and kidney failure follows between 1 and 3 days after ingestion.

So the message is very clear to all cat owners. **Do not grow lilies in your garden or keep as cut flowers in your home!** It's simply not worth taking the risk.

Despite these warnings, if owners do come across a situation where a cat seems to be covered in the pollen or may have eaten part of the plant, you **must get it to the vet immediately as a life-or-death emergency** and **STOP** the cat from licking the pollen off its coat. (You will need to physically restrain it from grooming itself whilst somebody else drives you to the vets).

Symptoms of lily poisoning can include vomiting, depression, respiratory problems, paralysis, seizures and swelling of the face or paws. Affected cats will require intravenous fluid therapy and may have to go under general anaesthetic to have their stomachs washed out. Even this may not be sufficient or timely enough to save the cat's life, and even if it does survive it may be left with chronic renal problems or pancreatitis and a reduced life expectancy.