FOOD & PLANTS

Is Aloe Vera Toxic to Cats? The Plant, the Gel and What to Do

Yes. Aloe plants are toxic to cats: eating the leaves can cause vomiting, diarrhea and lethargy. The ASPCA considers the gel itself edible, but keep the plant, and products made with aloe, away from your cat.

By Catt County Cat Nippers • Reviewed October 30, 2026 • 5 min read • 9 cited sources

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The short answer

Yes, aloe plants are toxic to cats. The ASPCA lists aloe (Aloe vera) as toxic to cats, dogs and horses. Aloe is toxic to cats and can cause vomiting, diarrhea and lethargy.

The harm comes from saponins and anthraquinones (ASPCA). Merck's veterinary manual places the anthraquinones in the latex of the leaves, with higher concentrations in younger leaves.

The ASPCA adds that the gel is considered edible, which is why aloe confuses people. But a cat that bites a leaf does not get clean gel, so the plant is not safe for cats, whichever part they go for.

Why aloe upsets a cat's gut

Anthraquinones are purgatives, substances that push the bowels to move (Pet Poison Helpline). That is why aloe's main signs are in the gut. Merck describes abrupt, severe diarrhea, low blood sugar or both after a pet eats aloe, with vomiting in some cases.

A 2023 review in the journal Toxins agrees: aloe's anthraquinones act on the stomach and bowel, causing vomiting, diarrhea and sometimes low blood sugar.

Diarrhea that comes on fast can cost a small animal a lot of fluid, and that is what the treatment aims at: Merck's advice to vets is to control the diarrhea and the fluid loss.

Aloe, part by part

ALOE AND CATS, PART BY PART

What your cat got into	For a cat?	Why
A chewed leaf, any size	Toxic	Saponins and anthraquinones (ASPCA), with the latex in the leaf (Merck)
A young leaf	Toxic	Merck finds more anthraquinones in younger leaves
Latex from a cut or broken leaf	Toxic	Where Merck places the anthraquinones
Clear inner gel, on its own	Considered edible (ASPCA)	Hard to separate cleanly from the latex at home, so don't offer it
Bottled gel, lotion or sunburn product	Call and read out the label	Products hold other ingredients, and cats swallow what they lick
Aloe juice or drinks made for people	Don't give it	None of the sources we read says it is safe for cats

The ASPCA's note about the gel is a fact about toxicity. It is not a reason to feed aloe to a cat.

This quick sheet is the start of the guide. Still to read: Signs to watch for, If your cat chewed aloe, What the vet may do and 5 more sections, plus the Toxic & Safe Houseplants for Cats Chart. Read it all free when you join our pet health emails at cattcountycatnippers.org/articles/is-aloe-vera-toxic-to-cats

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