HEALTH & SAFETY

Are Lilies Toxic to Cats? Which Lilies, and What to Do

True lilies and daylilies cause kidney failure in cats, even from pollen. Which lilies are dangerous, the signs hour by hour, why treatment within 18 hours matters, which plants to remove, and what to do after an exposure.

By Catt County Cat Nippers • Reviewed October 28, 2026 • 4 min read • 4 cited sources

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The short answer

Yes. True lilies (Lilium) and daylilies (Hemerocallis) cause kidney failure in cats. Every part is toxic: leaves, petals, pollen, even the water in the vase. A small bite of a leaf or petal, a few pollen grains licked off the fur, or a drink from the vase can cause fatal kidney failure in less than 3 days, the FDA warns.

If you think a cat has touched or eaten any part of a lily, take it to a vet right away, before any signs appear. Treatment started early gives the best chance: if it is delayed by 18 hours or more, the kidney damage is generally permanent.

AT A GLANCE

- If a cat ate a toxic plant, take the cat, and the plant or a photo of it, to an emergency vet right away, even if the cat seems fine.
- With lilies, early treatment with IV fluids gives the best chance of recovery.

Which lilies are dangerous

Many plants are called lilies, and they are not equally dangerous. Peace lilies, calla lilies and Peruvian lilies do not cause kidney failure, but peace and calla lilies can irritate the mouth. Lily of the valley is a different danger: it affects the heart.

LILIES AND CATS

Plant	Risk	What it does
True lilies (Lilium): Easter, tiger, Asiatic, Oriental, Stargazer, rubrum, Japanese show and wood lilies	Emergency	Kidney failure, from any part of the plant
Daylilies (Hemerocallis)	Emergency	Kidney failure, from any part of the plant

Plant	Risk	What it does
Lily of the valley (Convallaria)	Emergency	Poisons the heart: vomiting, an irregular heartbeat, a weak pulse, and it can kill
Gloriosa or flame lily	Emergency	Very dangerous to cats and dogs
Peace lily and calla lily	Less harmful	Crystals that irritate the mouth: pain, drooling, vomiting, swelling. No kidney failure
Peruvian lily (Alstroemeria)	Less harmful	Mild stomach upset. No kidney failure

From the FDA and the ASPCA. Not sure what a plant is? Check the Latin name on the label, and treat an unknown "lily" as a true lily.

The signs, hour by hour

The FDA describes how lily poisoning unfolds in a cat that isn't treated:

- 0 to 12 hours after eating it: less active, drooling, vomiting, not eating.
- 12 to 24 hours: signs of kidney damage start, such as urinating more, and dehydration.
- 24 to 72 hours: kidney failure, which kills a cat that isn't treated.

> **Don't wait for these signs. By the time kidney damage shows, the 18-hour window for treatment may have passed.**

This quick sheet is the start of the guide. Still to read: If you think a cat was exposed, What the vet does, Keep lilies out of a home with cats and 2 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/toxic-houseplants-for-cats-guide

Sources

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