



# Poison HOTLINE

1-800-222-1222

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## Did you know .....

A person's blood alcohol concentration (BAC) can continue to rise even after he or she has passed out. If a person drinks more than one drink per hour, the amount of alcohol exceeds the liver's metabolic capacity and the BAC builds up in the body. Even after a person stops drinking, alcohol in the stomach and intestine continues to enter the bloodstream and circulate throughout the body. The result is increasing levels of intoxication.

Rapid binge drinking is especially dangerous because the victim can ingest a fatal dose before becoming unconscious or exhibiting many of the other signs of alcohol poisoning.

## Poisonous Plants In and Around the Home

Indoor plants are a wonderful addition to a home and often improve the appearance of the home. While many house plants are safe, some are poisonous to people or pets. The degree of toxicity varies among plants and can include skin irritation, upset stomach, and burning of the mouth and throat.

Many common houseplants have calcium oxalate crystals in their juice or sap. These microscopic crystals resemble tiny needles or splinters of glass. When the plant leaves are chewed, the crystals are released causing pain and irritation. The plants mother-in-law's tongue or dumbcane (*Dieffenbachia* species) also have enzymes that when combined with the oxalate crystals causes more pain and irritation than other plants with calcium oxalate crystals. Other plants containing calcium oxalate crystals include: *Caladium* species; pothos or devil's ivy (*Epipremnum*); *Philodendron*; peace lily (*Spathiphyllum*); arrowhead vine (*Syngonium*); elephant's ear (*Colocasia*, *Alocasia*, and *Xanthosoma* species); and the Swiss cheese plant (*Monstera*).

As for outdoor plants, the castor bean plant (*Ricinus*) produces beautiful flowers, but also has seeds that contain ricin. The ricin can be extracted and refined into a chemical weapon. However, the castor bean seed has a tough shell which must be broken (e.g. chewed) in order for the ricin to be of concern. Seeds ingested whole generally pass through the GI tract without problem.

Lily-of-the-valley (*Convallaria*) and the bold pink foxglove (*Digitalis*) contain cardiac glycosides and can cause cardiac toxicity. Even water with cut lily-of-the-valley flowers may contain traces of the potentially deadly cardiac glycoside convallatoxin. Symptoms caused by these cardiac glycosides include headaches, hot flashes, hallucinations, and irritability. Large doses can lead to bradycardia, hypotension, coma and death.

The hydrangea or hortensia (*Hydrangea*) have hydragin, which is a cyanogenic glycoside. While in theory, the hydrangea could lead to cyanide poisoning, it is far more likely to only cause nausea, vomiting and diarrhea.

For questions or concerns about an exposure, call IPCC at **1-800-222-1222**.

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**Help**  
**1-800-222-1222**

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