



Ice Melt Safety Issues for Pets

Not only is sodium and chloride harmful to the water supply, but it can also be harmful to pets. The following article from the ASPCA™ provides information on pet safety during winter including information on issues that can be caused by ice melt products.

Keeping Pets Safe during Winter: The Dangers of Ice Melts

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It's cold outside! For many of us in the United States, the winter months mean snow and ice. Whether the snow has you dreaming of making snow angels or wishing you were at the beach, the [ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center \(APCC\)](#) has a few tips you should keep in mind regarding a common cold weather item that could pose a problem for your furry friends: ice melts.

Ice melts are commonly made of different kinds of salt. Sodium chloride, potassium chloride, calcium chloride and magnesium chloride are all common ingredients. While pets don't typically ingest ice melts on purpose, your pet may become exposed if they lick their feet after walking through a recently treated area, or by eating snow that may have ice melts in it.

While most ingestions are accidental, be warned: there are some pets who find that they like the salty taste of ice melts and will eat it directly out of the packaging if given the chance.

The most common issue seen when a pet ingests ice melts is stomach upset or vomiting and diarrhea. In some cases, vomiting or diarrhea can be severe and cause concern for dehydration. Depending on your pet's size, how much they consume and the specific type of ice melt, more serious concerns can arise. Ingesting too much of an ice melt can lead to an elevation in sodium level, causing tremors and seizures. If the product contains calcium chloride, ulceration to the mouth may also occur.

Pet-friendly ice melts typically contain urea or magnesium chloride. While these are typically safer ingredients, they may also cause stomach upset. So it is best to be careful with them, as well.

Due to the risk of slipping and falling not only for us but for our furry friends, ice melts are a necessity in many parts of the country. There are, however, a few things you can do to minimize potential problems for your pets:

1. Don't let dogs eat any of the salt or any of the snow (especially the slushy snow) outside that may have been treated with an ice melt.
2. Wipe your pet's paws as soon as they get inside with a damp cloth or baby wipes. Minimize paw licking until their paws are completely clean. This will also help minimize risk for skin irritation that may be seen from walking through ice melts
3. If you have a sensitive dog whose paw pads are becoming irritated, cracked or are bleeding from the ice melts, paw wax or doggie booties provide an excellent barrier to minimize risk to sensitive feet.
4. Keep all ice melt packaging out of paws' reach.

If your pet has been exposed to an ice melt or is showing symptoms indicative of ingestion, it is important for you to contact a veterinarian or APCC at (888) 426-4435 immediately. You can also [download the APCC number directly to your cell phone](#), or download the [APCC Mobile App](#) for more information concerning your pet's safety in the palm of your hand.

MVD has found the following pet-safe ice melt products that are free of sodium and chloride. These products are available for purchase through online platforms, including manufacturer websites and other e-commerce retailers, as well as in home improvement stores, pet stores, and local hardware stores.



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