

# Onion and Garlic Toxicity in Dogs and Cats

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## Toxin

S-methylcysteine sulfoxide, *n*-propyl disulfide, methyl disulfide, allyl disulfide

## Source

Onion or garlic (*Allium* spp.) including those that are fresh as well as those dried for use as spices.

## General Information

Garlic and onion are used as flavor enhancers in food. Some human baby foods have onion in them, and it is not recommended to feed them to pets. In dogs and cats, garlic and onion can cause Heinz body anemia, resulting in a breakdown of the red blood cells and anemia. The very small amounts of garlic that are present in some commercial pet foods have not been shown to cause any problems.

The bulbs, bulbets, flowers, and stems of the garlic and onion are all poisonous.

## Toxic Dose

Unknown. Cats appear to be more sensitive than dogs.

## Signs

Vomiting, diarrhea, anemia, discolored urine, weakness, liver damage, allergic reactions, asthmatic attacks, and in case of skin exposure, contact dermatitis.

## Immediate Action

Induce vomiting and seek veterinary attention. If dermal (skin) exposure, bathe thoroughly and contact a veterinarian.

## Veterinary Care

General treatment: The induction of vomiting may be continued, gastric lavage is performed, and [activated charcoal](#) administered, if ingested. If dermal exposure has occurred, the animal will be bathed and dried thoroughly.

Supportive treatment: IV fluids are administered to maintain hydration. The animal will be monitored and treated for liver damage. Repeated blood tests will be performed to monitor for anemia; blood transfusions will be administered if necessary.

Specific treatment: Unavailable.

## Prognosis

Variable.