Whether you’re on a hike or at the playground, it’s important to be aware of your surroundings. Unassuming plants can harm you, your kids, or your pets if you’re not careful. At AdventHealth, our goal is to provide exemplary care to the Kansas City metro area. That care starts before you enter our doors, by giving you the information necessary to stay safe while spending time outdoors.

With the help of this guide, you should be able to identify the most common poisonous plants in the KC area and understand how they affect people and pets. Some of the plants included are dangerous to ingest, others only to touch. If you’re able to recognize common poisonous plants and their effects, you can avoid them or know when and where to seek treatment in the event of exposure.

**GENERAL TIPS:**
- Avoid touching any plant you can’t identify.
- Never eat any part of a plant or mushroom you aren’t 100 percent sure is edible.
- Keep a close eye on little hands and furry mouths—even plants that aren’t poisonous can cause choking or allergic reactions if swallowed.
- Know the names of the plants you encounter daily—poison control operators often have a hard time identifying plants by description only.
**CRAB APPLE**

**APPEARANCE AND EFFECTS:**
- Small, wild apples
- Poisonous if eaten in large quantities
- Causes stomach pain and (rarely) cyanide poisoning

Did you know that apple seeds contain trace amounts of cyanide? Don’t call poison control just yet—you would have to eat hundreds of seeds to experience more than discomfort. Crab apples, a close relative of the apple, have the same poison content in their seeds.

**PEACE LILY**

**APPEARANCE AND EFFECTS:**
- Broad, shiny leaves
- Flower with spiky spadix and a cupped white petal
- Causes oral pain, drooling and vomiting in people and pets

While not true lilies, peace lilies are known for their striking appearance and easy care. You may have one as a houseplant or have received one as a gift. Though beautiful, peace lilies can be dangerous to pets. Other types of lilies are also toxic to cats and dogs, so beware before keeping these beauties indoors.
### Common Buckthorn

**APPEARANCE AND EFFECTS:**
- Tree
- Gray-brown bark
- Spiny branches
- Oval leaves
- Seeds cause stomach pain and diarrhea in people and animals

The parts of the common buckthorn to avoid are the seeds and fruit. Common buckthorn fruit is similar in size to a blueberry but shiny and black.

### Poison Hemlock

**APPEARANCE AND EFFECTS:**
- Shrub
- Jagged, triangular leaves
- Purple-ish stems
- Small, white flowers
- Causes dizziness, issues with movement, nausea and even death

Unsurprisingly, poison hemlock is poisonous to animals and people. All parts of the poison hemlock plant are poisonous to people and animals and can remain poisonous even after the plant dies.

### Oleander

**APPEARANCE AND EFFECTS:**
- Shrub or small tree
- Bright pink, funnel-shaped flowers (early to late summer)
- Narrow, dull green leaves
- Causes weakness, nausea and vomiting, heart problems and even death in people and animals

Oleander is one of the most widely known poisonous plants. The flowers, stems, leaves and twigs of the oleander plant are all poisonous if ingested.
06 POINSETTIAS

APPEARANCE AND EFFECTS:
• Pointed, oval leaves
• Red flowers with similar pointed petals
• Milky sap
• Can cause skin irritation, drooling, vomiting and diarrhea

A holiday favorite, poinsettias are often seen in homes and décor during the winter months. Their sap can cause skin irritation, and if ingested, the flowers and leaves can cause drooling, vomiting and diarrhea in children and pets.

07 FALSE MORELS

APPEARANCE AND EFFECTS:
• Ridged caps (similar to Morels)
• Filled with white fibers
• Causes dizziness, vomiting and diarrhea

False morels have similar caps to morels but are filled with cottony fibers where genuine morels are hollow. To stay safe when hunting morels or other mushrooms, be sure never to eat any mushroom you can’t identify—poisonous mushrooms can look similar to edible varieties. When in doubt, toss it out!
Nettles are one of the more common varieties of irritating plants, and the wood nettle is no exception. The wood nettle is covered in white, stinging hairs. These hairs contain irritants that they inject into the skin like tiny needles.

Poison ivy is arguably the most well-known skin-irritating plant. We’ve all heard the age-old “leaves of three, let it be.” Coming in contact with any part of the plant, or even with tools or a pet that has come in contact with the plant, can cause a rash.

Poison oak is very similar to poison ivy, causing skin irritation with an oily sap. Poison oak is native to Missouri, but has been documented only in select southern counties; it is not native to Kansas.
APPEARANCE AND EFFECTS:

- Sac-like cup around the base of the stem (may be hidden by soil)
- Umbrella-shaped
- White gills
- Causes severe vomiting, abdominal cramps and bloody diarrhea

Amanita mushrooms are not a specific mushroom but a mushroom category of more than 600 species worldwide. These species can be difficult to tell apart, but all should be approached with caution. Amanita mushrooms currently account for about 90 percent of mushroom-related deaths per year. Err on the side of caution and avoid any umbrella-shaped mushroom with white gills—it may be an amanita.

APPEARANCE AND EFFECTS:

- 2-4 feet tall
- Blue or purple palmate (hand-shaped) flowers
- Poisonous to touch and if ingested
- Causes blistering of skin, intense burning in the mouth/digestive tract, nausea and convulsions

A relative of the buttercup, monkshood is a staple in many Midwest gardens. All parts of the plant, including the sap are toxic, so it isn’t suitable for cuttings. This plant is a beauty but shouldn’t be grown within reach for children or pets.
SEEKING TREATMENT
The idea that poisonous plants grow all around us can be scary, but by staying informed and aware of your surroundings, you can stay safe. Should you or someone in your care have a reaction to a poisonous plant, it’s important to assess the symptoms and act accordingly. When possible, take the plant with you when you seek treatment so that it can be identified.

If your symptoms include a rash, nausea, stomach pain, diarrhea or other non-emergency afflictions, seek treatment at one of our AdventHealth Centra Care locations. Centra Care provides the same exemplary care of the AdventHealth system in non-emergency situations. Find a location near you or schedule an appointment online.

If you or a loved one is experiencing extreme dizziness, issues with movement, trouble breathing or bloody diarrhea, seek emergency treatment immediately. AdventHealth provides 24/7 care at three Kansas City locations. Find one near you. Always call 911 in a life-threatening situation.

AdventHealth Emergency Departments
Shawnee Mission, KS: 913-676-2218
Lenexa, KS: 913-676-8501
Overland Park, KS: 913-373-1100

AdventHealth Centra Care
Lenexa, KS: 913-789-4099
Overland Park, KS: 913-549-4242
Olathe, KS: 913-839-1759
Shawnee, KS: 913-268-4455

The National Poison Control Center
1-800-222-1222
Emergency and non-emergency situations
Free and confidential

ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center
1-888-426-4435
$65 consultation fee