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Dieffenbachia

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Dieffenbachia: A common house plant also known as "dumb cane". The large leaves are green with cream-colored blotches.

Is it toxic? All parts of the plant contain needle-like oxalate crystals. If the plant is chewed the crystals are released and can cause intense pain and possible swelling of the mouth.

Health Effects:

Skin: Potential burning and itching from contact with the "juice " of the plant. Handling of intact leaves is unlikely to cause symptoms.

Ingestion: Immediate pain and burning sensation of the mouth and lips. Possible swelling and blisters in mouth; more likely to occur if stem is chewed.

What to do?

Skin: Wash skin with soap and water and rinse thoroughly.

Ingestion: Rinse out mouth and drink a glass of milk. Sucking on a popsicle or an ice cube can help relieve discomfort in mouth. Eating some ice cream may also help.

If symptoms persist after the above first aid measures contact the Poison Control Centre.

How can I prevent exposure? Keep plant out of reach of small children. Wear gloves when cutting or trimming the plant.

Need more information: Call the Poison Control Centre.

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