

**For Immediate Release**  
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### **Warning! De-icer could pose danger for kids and pets**

As winter is making itself known around Washington State, residents are looking for solutions to “melt the ice” or at least make icy surfaces safer for walking and driving. Many people turn to chemical de-icers which can make children and pets ill if they ingest the product. The Washington Poison Center receives such calls every winter.

“The best option is not to use a de-icer,” said Dr. William Hurley, Medical Director of the Washington Poison Center. “Spread sand, non-clumping kitty litter or gravel as a nontoxic alternative.” Although those options don’t melt the ice, it will provide traction and reduce the chance of falls. You should sweep up afterward to reuse and to keep out of water systems.

If you do choose to use a de-icing agent, spread it according to the manufacturer's instruction. The correct use of de-icers is to apply a small amount, wait for the melting action to break the bond between the ice and pavement, and then physically remove the remaining ice and snow.

Most de-icing agents use varying types of salt or urea, a chemical used as a fertilizer. “Ingestion of any de-icer could be toxic. We highly recommend storing these products out of reach and in their original containers,” Hurley said. Contact the Washington Poison Center, **1-800-222-1222**, immediately for treatment advice. Be prepared to provide the product name to the poison specialist answering your call.

The Washington Poison Center, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit charitable organization that prevents harm from poisoning through expertise, collaboration and professional and public education. Reachable 24/7, the national poison hotline, **1-800-222-1222**, will connect you to specially-trained pharmacists, nurses and poison specialists. Poison help is always free and confidential. Services are available for people with hearing problems and for non-English speakers. [www.wapc.org](http://www.wapc.org)

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