This adorable little toad is not your normal toad; the Sonoran Desert Toad (*Bufo alvarius*) is extremely toxic to man's best friend, your dog. They are olive green to brown in color and have lumpy skin, large glandular lumps on their hind legs, golden eyes with horizontally oval pupils, large, poison-filled parotid glands behind their eyes and ears, and one or more distinctive white masses at the corners of their mouths. The Sonoran Desert Toad is common to Arizona and something you may want to keep an eye out for when you are out walking, in your yard or at the dog park. Just like one of our desert snakes can seriously injure man's best friend, so can this toad.

Should you encounter a Sonoran Desert Toad, simply move your dog away from it. Should your dog make contact with it, contact your veterinarian immediately. If your veterinarian is unavailable, please follow the following steps to provide aid to your pet:

**Sonoran Desert Toad First Aid for Dogs**

Turn on your garden hose to a gentle flow. Open your dog’s mouth with its nose pointed downward to prevent water and poison from going down its throat, then rub the dog’s tongue, gums and teeth repeatedly. You will also need to wash off your dog’s nose. Depending on your pet's exposure, continue rinsing its mouth for up to 10 to 15 minutes. If you are unable to immediately and thoroughly rinse out your dog’s mouth, if your dog has eaten all or part of the toad, and/or swallowed the enough toxin, it may have an irregular heartbeat and act strangely, as if in the grip of a hallucination. Call your veterinarian if you observe:

- Mouth irritation with foamy salivation
- Severe irritation to the eyes and nose
- Extremely dark pink or red gums
- Depression
- Weakness
- Collapse
- Difficulty breathing
- Seizures
- Fever
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea

Because Sonoran Desert Toads tend to be frequent visitors in our area you may want to talk with your veterinarian about precautions you can take and if he or she has a preferred emergency clinic. While these toads are not a threat to people, you should wash your hands, nose, eyes and mouth with antibacterial soap and warm water as soon as possible, if you touch one.