



Toxic Foods

The food we eat is delicious, but some of it can be toxic to our pets. When your dog or cat enjoys occasional treats from the dinner table, a home-cooked diet, or even gets into food not meant for him or her, please keep in mind that these following foods are not safe. This is even more important during the festive season when family and friends can often think they are doing your dog a favour by feeding him a special treat.



Bread Dough

While cooked bread is generally safe for our pets, uncooked bread dough made with yeast can cause problems. The yeast in the bread dough can make ethanol gas when it ferments in a warm and moist environment, such as the stomach. This ethanol gas can lead to a distended stomach, possible twisting of the stomach (GDV, also known as “bloat”), or alcohol toxicosis. The effects of alcohol can include stumbling, weakness, blindness, vomiting and loss of consciousness. If your pet eats bread dough, please seek medical attention immediately.



Chocolate

Chocolate is delicious to people and animals alike. Unfortunately, dogs and cats are unable to clear the metabolic products as quickly as humans do, which leads to toxic effects. Chocolate (except for white chocolate) contains theobromine and caffeine. Both of these products can dangerously stimulate the body’s heart and nervous system, leading to irregular heart rhythm, high blood pressure, muscle tremors and possibly seizures. Because the various types of chocolate contain different amounts of theobromine, you should contact a veterinarian immediately to determine if your pet needs emergency treatment.



Macadamia Nuts

Macadamia nuts can affect the nervous system, joints and gastrointestinal tract in dogs. Symptoms may include painful joints, vomiting, weakness, unsteady gait, tremors and depression. Because even a small amount of nuts can cause symptoms, immediate treatment by a veterinarian is recommended.



Grapes and Raisins

Approximately half the number of dogs who eat grapes or raisins develop kidney failure. Unfortunately, the toxic agent in the grapes/raisins has not been identified, and it is unknown why some dogs are affected by the fruit while others are not. Even one grape or raisin has the possibility of affecting the kidneys, so immediate medical attention is recommended for all dogs that may have eaten any. There are limited reports of kidney failure in cats after eating grape/raisins, but it is uncertain if this is due to decreased toxicity or decreased likelihood of eating the fruit. Because kidney failure can be fatal, hospitalisation for several days and fluid therapy to support the kidneys is usually recommended when grapes/raisins have been eaten.



Mouldy food

Mould on food can produce toxins which affects the nervous system in dogs and cats. Foods most often associated with these toxins include mouldy dairy products, walnuts, peanuts, or grain products including pasta and bread. Access to a compost bin or decaying plant material is also associated with these toxins.

Symptoms can be severe and range from mild muscle tremors to hypersalivation, agitation, seizures, overheating and even death. Most patients with this toxicity require hospitalisation and aggressive treatment. Any pet known or suspected to have eaten mouldy food should be brought to a veterinarian for emergency treatment.



Onions and Garlic

Raw or cooked onion and garlic contain compounds which damage red blood cells, leading to anaemia. Cats are more susceptible than dogs. Symptoms may not be visible for several days following ingestion, and can include weakness, lethargy, pale gums, vomiting, diarrhoea, and increased breathing rate or effort. If the anaemia is significant, a blood transfusion may be necessary. Any pet found to have eaten onions or garlic should be brought to a veterinarian for emergency treatment.



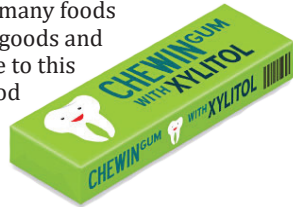
Salt

The most common causes of excessive salt ingestion include homemade play dough, paintballs, de-icing salts and sea water. Symptoms associated with salt toxicity include vomiting, diarrhoea, muscle tremors, weakness, difficulty breathing, seizures and loss of consciousness. Patients with salt intoxication require immediate and aggressive medical care.



Xylitol

Xylitol is a sugar substitute used in many foods including gum, hard candies, baked goods and toothpaste. Dogs are highly sensitive to this product, and it can rapidly drop blood sugar levels and affect the liver. Clinical signs can include vomiting, weakness, tremors, seizures, collapse, bleeding and jaundice. Effects on blood sugar occur rapidly while liver changes may take 1-3 days to develop. Hospitalisation with close monitoring and aggressive care is recommended for dogs with who have ingested xylitol.



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Other foods toxic to dogs are:

Mushrooms

These can be extremely injurious to pet health and even fatal to dogs. Some kinds are worse than others, so it is best to prevent your dog from coming into contact with mushrooms of any type. Ensure that dogs are not attracted to wild mushrooms either, as these are poisonous to everyone, including humans.

Avocado and Persimmons

Avocados cause fluid accumulation in the lungs and are very toxic to dogs. Every part of them, including fruit, pits, jacket and leaves, are dangerous. The same goes for persimmons.

Tomatoes, Potatoes and Rhubarb

Tomatoes, especially unripe green ones, are toxic and can cause all sorts of problems that can lead to heart failure. Potato jackets are especially bad for dogs, as is the entire rhubarb plant. In fact, some parts of rhubarb are toxic to humans, too.

Nutmeg

This appears in various foods, especially those eaten around the holidays. It can be lethal to dogs. Avoid feeding processed gingerbread cookies, eggnog and other nutmeg-laced products to your canine friend.

Alcohol

While it is something that may happen in movies and on television, dogs should never ingest liquor of any sort in real life. Alcohol causes various behavioural problems (similar to humans) and may cause seizures, cardiac arrest and death, depending on how much alcohol a dog has consumed.

Source: <http://www.womansday.com/life/pet-care/a3775/pet-health-101-10-toxic-foods-for-dogs-77184/>
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