

Poisonous food substances

As with people there are certain products which are dangerous to our pets. Here is a list of foods to avoid and what to do if your pet does get hold of it.

Common food stuffs harmful to dogs

Grapes and Raisins

- Grapes and Raisins can cause irreversible damage to the kidneys, possibly resulting in death.
- Ingesting as few as 4-5 grapes or raisins can be poisonous to a 9kg dog, though the exact toxic dose is not established.
- Signs of toxicity include vomiting, loss of appetite, diarrhoea, abdominal pain, decreased urine production, weakness and drunken gait.
- Onset of signs typically occurs within 24 hours (though they can start just a few hours after consumption)

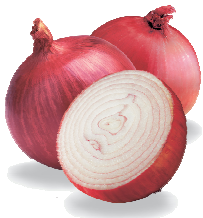


If you find that your dog has eaten grapes or raisins contact us as soon as possible.

You may start by inducing vomiting, or the stomach might be pumped (gastric lavage). Treatment involves aggressive supportive care - particularly fluid therapy and medications.

Onions

- Onions can cause a form of anaemia, a condition that causes the destruction of red blood cells. Kidney damage may follow.



- Toxicity may occur from similar foods such as garlic and chives.
- It is not clear what quantity of onions is poisonous, but the effects can be cumulative. Poisoning can result from raw, cooked and dehydrated forms. Avoid feeding table scraps and any foods cooked with onions (including some baby foods). Check your ingredients!
- Signs are secondary to anaemia, such as pale gums, rapid heart rate, weakness and lethargy. Other signs include vomiting, diarrhoea, and bloody urine.

Treatment may include inducing vomiting, blood transfusions and/or oxygen administration may be necessary, followed by specific fluid therapy.

Chocolate

- Chocolate and cocoa contain a chemical called theobromide that can adversely affect the heart, lungs, kidney and central nervous system.
- Pure baking chocolate is most toxic, while milk chocolate requires a higher quantity to cause harm. A 9kg dog can be poisoned after consuming about 56 grams of baking chocolate, but it would take nearly 560 grams of milk chocolate to cause harm. Ingestion of cacao bean mulch can also be toxic.
- Signs include excitement, tremors, seizures, vomiting, diarrhoea, abnormal heart rate/rhythm, drunken gait, hyperthermia and coma.

Treatment may include inducing vomiting or perform gastric lavage. Treatment includes administration of activated charcoal and aggressive supportive care with fluid therapy and medications



Xylitol

- Xylitol is a sugar-free sweetener most often found in chewing gum and candy. In dogs, it stimulates the pancreas to secrete insulin, resulting in hypoglycaemia (low blood sugar). Xylitol ingestion can also cause severe liver damage.
- As few as two pieces of gum can be hypoglycaemia to a 9kg dog. A pack of gum can cause liver damage.
- Signs of toxicity can occur within 30-60 minutes and include weakness, drunken gait, collapse and seizures.



Treatment may include inducing vomiting or perform gastric lavage. The affected dog will likely need to be treated intravenously with dextrose (sugar) and monitored closely for 1-2 days. Many dogs improve with supportive care if treated early enough, though liver damage can be permanent.

Caffeinated items

- Caffeine is quite similar to the toxic chemical in chocolate. It can damage the heart, lungs, kidney and central nervous system.
 - Commons sources of toxicity include caffeine pills, coffee beans and coffee, large amounts of tea, and chocolate.
 - Signs typically begin with restlessness, hyperactivity and vomiting. These can be followed by panting, weakness, drunken gait increased heart rate, muscle tremors and convulsions.
- You may induce vomiting or perform gastric lavage. Treatment includes administration of activated charcoal and supportive care with fluid therapy and medications.



Alcohol and yeast dough

- Alcoholic beverages contain ethanol - a seriously toxic chemical compound that causes central nervous system and respiratory depression.
 - Uncooked yeast doughs also produce ethanol.
 - Even small amounts of ethanol can cause toxic effects.
 - Signs include sedation, depression, lethargy, weakness, drunken gait and hypothermia (low body temperature).
 - Ethanol is rapidly absorbed into the system, so it is important to seek medical attention quickly. It is not usually helpful to induce vomiting. Treatment includes aggressive supportive care with fluid therapy and medications.



Fruit pits and seeds

- Apple seeds, cherry pits, peach pits, and plum pits contain the toxin cyanide.
- Signs of cyanide poisoning include vomiting, heavy breathing, apnoea (no breathing), tachycardia (increased heart rate), cardiac arrhythmias, coma, skin irritation.
- In some cases, antidotes are available. Other treatments include oxygen therapy, fluids and supportive care.

Also take note that the leaves, fruit, seeds and bark of avocados contain Persin, which can cause vomiting and diarrhoea in dogs. Also, the fat content is not healthy for dogs.



Other foods to avoid

Certain foods, while not considered toxic, can still be unhealthy for your dog. Avoid any foods that are high in fat, sugar or sodium. These foods can contribute to indigestion, obesity, dehydration, electrolyte imbalance and more. Dairy products may be difficult for dogs to digest. Corn cobs and bones can cause GI obstruction. Cooked bones may splinter and break easily, risking GI damage.



Like people, too much junk food can cause poor condition and decreased energy. Remember that your dog is smaller than you and may be sensitive. What seems like "just a bite" for you is more like a small meal for your dog. If you want to feed homemade food, seek advice from your vet.