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## **Dangerous Foods for Dogs**

Who can resist those big brown eyes and cute doggie grin? Can a little reward from the table really hurt your dog? Well, that depends on what it is and what's in it. A chip with guacamole can cause your dog some real problems. In fact, there's a lot of people food your dog should never eat. And, it's not just because of weight. Some foods are downright dangerous for dogs - and some of these common foods may surprise you.

### **Avocado**

No matter how good you think the guacamole is, you shouldn't give it to your dog. Avocados contain a substance called persin. It's harmless for humans who aren't allergic. But it's highly toxic in most animals, including dogs. Just a little can cause your dog to vomit and have diarrhea. And, if you happen to be growing avocados at home, keep your dog away from the plants. Persin is in the leaves, seed, and bark, as well as in the fruit.

### **Alcohol**

Beer, liquor, wine, foods containing alcohol - none of it's good for your dog. That's because alcohol has the same effect on a dog's liver and brain that it has on humans. But it takes far less to do its damage. Just a little can cause vomiting, diarrhea, central nervous system depression, problems with coordination, difficulty breathing, coma, even death. And, the smaller the dog, the greater the effect.

### **Onions**

Onion in all forms - powdered, raw, cooked, or dehydrated - can destroy a dog's red blood cells, leading to anemia. That can happen even with the onion powder found in some baby food. An occasional small dose is probably OK. But just eating a large quantity once or eating smaller amounts regularly can cause onion poisoning. Symptoms include vomiting, diarrhea, little interest in food, dullness, and breathlessness.

### **Coffee, Tea, and Other Caffeine**

Caffeine in large enough quantities can be fatal for a dog. And, there is no antidote. Symptoms of caffeine poisoning include restlessness, rapid breathing, heart palpitations, muscle tremors, fits, and bleeding. In addition to tea and coffee - including beans and grounds - caffeine can be found in cocoa, chocolate, colas, and stimulant drinks such as Red Bull. It's also in some cold medicines and pain killers.

### **Grapes and Raisins**

Grapes and raisins have often been used as treats for dogs. But it's not a good idea. Although it isn't clear why, grapes and raisins can cause kidney failure in dogs. And, just a small amount can make a dog ill. Repeated vomiting and being hyperactive are early signs. Within a day, the dog will become lethargic and depressed. The best prevention is to keep grapes and raisins off counters and other places your dog can reach.

## **Milk and Other Dairy Products**

On a hot day, it may be tempting to share your ice cream cone with your dog. But if your dog could, it would thank you for not doing so. Milk and milk-based products can cause diarrhea and other digestive upset as well as set up food allergies (which often manifest as itchiness).

## **Macadamia Nuts**

Dogs should not eat nuts or foods containing nuts because nuts can be fatal. As few as 6 raw or roasted macadamia nuts can make a dog ill. Symptoms of poisoning include muscle tremors, weakness or paralysis of the hindquarters, vomiting, elevated body temperature, and rapid heart rate. Eating chocolate with the nuts will make symptoms worse, leading to possible kidney failure and death.

## **Candy and Gum**

Candy, gum, toothpaste, baked goods, and some diet foods are sweetened with xylitol. Xylitol can cause an increase in the insulin circulating through your dog's body. That can cause your dog's blood sugar to drop and lead to liver failure. Initial symptoms include vomiting, lethargy, and loss of coordination. Eventually, the dog may have seizures, and liver failure can occur within just a few days.

## **Chocolate**

Most people know that chocolate is bad for dogs. The toxic agent in chocolate is theobromine. It's in all kinds of chocolate, even white chocolate. The most dangerous kinds, though, are dark chocolate and unsweetened baking chocolate. Eating chocolate, even just licking out the icing bowl, can cause a dog to vomit, have diarrhea, and be excessively thirsty. It can also cause abnormal heart rhythm, tremors, seizures, and death.

## **Fat Trimmings and Bones**

Table scraps often contain meat fat that a human didn't eat and bones. Both are dangerous for dogs. Fat trimmed from meat, both cooked and uncooked, can cause pancreatitis in dogs. And, although it seems natural to give a dog a bone, a dog can choke on it. Bones can also splinter and cause an obstruction or lacerations of your dog's digestive system. It's best to just forget about the doggie bag.

## **Persimmons, Peaches, and Plums**

The problem with these fruits is the seeds or pits. The seeds from persimmons can cause inflammation of the small intestine in dogs. They can also cause intestinal obstruction. Obstruction is also a possibility if a dog eats the pit from a peach or plum. Plus, peach and plum pits contain cyanide, which is poisonous to both humans and dogs. The difference is humans know not to eat them. Dogs don't.

## **Raw Eggs**

There are two problems with giving your dog raw eggs. The first is the possibility of food poisoning from bacteria like Salmonella or E. coli. The second is that an enzyme in raw eggs interferes with the absorption of a particular B vitamin. This can cause skin problems as well as problems with your dog's coat.

## **Raw Meat and Fish**

Raw meat and raw fish, like raw eggs, can contain bacteria that causes food poisoning. In addition, certain kinds of fish such as salmon, trout, shad, or sturgeon can contain a parasite that causes "fish disease." If not treated, the disease can be fatal within 2 weeks. The first signs of illness are vomiting, fever, and big lymph nodes. Thoroughly cooking the fish will kill the parasite and protect your dog.

## **Salt**

It's not a good idea to share salty foods like chips or pretzels with your dog. Eating too much salt can cause excessive thirst and urination and lead to sodium ion poisoning. Symptoms of too much salt include vomiting, diarrhea, depression, tremors, elevated body temperature, and seizures. It may even cause death.

## **Sugary Foods and Drinks**

Too much sugar can do the same thing to dogs that it does to humans. It can lead to obesity, dental problems, and even diabetes.

## **Yeast Dough**

Before it's baked, bread dough needs to rise. And, that's exactly what it would do in your dog's stomach if your dog ate it. As it swells inside, the dough can stretch the dog's abdomen and cause severe pain. In addition, when the yeast ferments the dough to make it rise, it produces alcohol that can lead to alcohol poisoning.

## **Your Medicine**

Reaction to a drug commonly prescribed for humans is the most common cause of poisoning in dogs. Just as you would do for your children, keep all medicines out of your dog's reach. And, never give your dog any over-the-counter medicine unless told to do so by your vet. Ingredients

such as acetaminophen or ibuprofen are common in pain relievers and cold medicine. And, they can be deadly for your dog.

## **Kitchen Pantry: No Dogs Allowed**

Many other items commonly found on kitchen shelves can harm your dog. For instance, baking powder and baking soda are both highly toxic. So are nutmeg and other spices. Keeping food items high enough to be out of your dog's reach and keeping pantry doors closed will help protect your dog from serious food-related illness.

## **If Your Dog Eats What It Shouldn't**

Dogs explore with their mouth. And, no matter how cautious you are, it's possible your dog can find and swallow what it shouldn't. It's a smart idea to always keep the number of your local vet, the closest emergency clinic, and the ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center - (888) 426-4435 - where you know you can find it in an emergency. And, if you think your dog has consumed something that's toxic, call for emergency help at once.

## **What Dogs Can Eat**

You can ensure your dog has a healthy, well-balanced diet by asking your vet to recommend a quality dog food. A well-designed dog food gives your pet all the nutrients it needs for an active and healthy life. But that doesn't mean you can't sometimes give your dog human food as a special treat - as long as portions are limited, and the foods are cooked, pure, and not fatty or heavily seasoned. See the next few slides for some tasty suggestions. But if you're looking to human food as a meal replacement, talk to your vet about amounts and frequency.

### **Safe: Lean Meats**

Most dogs are fine eating lean cuts of meat that have been thoroughly cooked. Be sure to remove all visible fat - including the skin on poultry. Also be sure that there are no bones in the meat before you give it to your dog.

### **Safe: Some Fresh Fruits**

Slices of apples, oranges, bananas, and watermelon make tasty treats for your dog. Be sure to remove any seeds first, though. Seeds, stems, and leaves can cause serious problems.

### **Safe: Some Vegetables**

Your dog can have a healthy snack of carrot sticks, green beans, cucumber slices, or zucchini slices. Even a plain baked potato is OK. Be sure, though, not to let your dog eat any raw potatoes or any potato plants it might have access to in your garden.

### **Safe: Cooked White Rice and Pasta**

Dogs may enjoy plain white rice or pasta after it's cooked. And, a serving of plain white rice with some boiled chicken can sometimes provide welcome relief from gastrointestinal upset.