



## DANGERS TO YOUR DOG - FOODS TO AVOID

**Alcohol** Beer, liquor, wine, foods containing alcohol - none of it's good. 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.

**Avocados** Avocados contain a substance called persin. It's harmless for humans who aren't allergic. But large amounts might be toxic to dogs. 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.

**Chocolate** Most people know that chocolate is bad for dogs. The toxic part is theobromine. It's in all kinds of chocolate, even white. The most dangerous kinds, though, are dark chocolate, chocolate mulch, and unsweetened baking chocolate. Eating it, even just licking 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.

**Coffee, Tea & Other Caffeine** Caffeine in large enough quantities can be fatal. And there is no antidote. Symptoms of caffeine poisoning include restlessness, rapid breathing, heart palpitations, muscle tremors, and fits. 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.

**Fat Trimmings and Bones** Table scraps often contain meat fat that a human didn't eat as well as bones. Both are dangerous for dogs. Fat trimmed from meat, both cooked and uncooked, can cause pancreatitis. And, although it seems natural to give a dog a bone, he can choke on it. If your dog does have a bone it should be **raw** as they are less likely to splinter and cause an obstruction or lacerations of your dog's digestive system than cooked bones. It's best to just forget about the doggie bag.

**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. And just a small amount can make a dog ill. Repeated vomiting is an early sign. Within a day, she'll become lethargic and depressed. The best prevention is to keep grapes and raisins off counters and other places your dog can reach.

**Macadamia Nuts** Dogs shouldn't eat macadamia nuts or foods with them because they can be fatal. As few as six raw or roasted macadamias can make them 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, possibly leading to death.

**Milk and Other Dairy Products** On a hot day, it may be tempting to share your ice cream cone with your dog. But if he could, he'd 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 show up as itchiness).

**Mushrooms** Mushrooms can contain toxins, which may affect multiple systems in the body, cause shock, and possibly result in death.

**Onions, Garlic and Chives** Onions and garlic 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 eating a large quantity just once or eating smaller amounts regularly can cause poisoning. Symptoms of anemia include weakness, vomiting, little interest in food, dullness, and breathlessness.

**Persimmons, Peaches & 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 if she's been eating them for a long time.

**Raw Meat & Fish** Raw meat and raw fish, like raw eggs, can contain bacteria that causes food poisoning. However see our separate Fact Sheet on Raw Feeding for Health and Behaviour. [\(LINK\)](#) In addition, certain kinds of fish such as salmon, trout, or sturgeon can contain a parasite that causes "fish disease" or "salmon poisoning 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 poisoning. Symptoms of too much salt include vomiting, diarrhea, depression, tremors, elevated body temperature, and seizures. It may even cause death.

**Sugary Foods & Drinks** Too much sugar can do the same thing to dogs that it does to humans. It can lead to obesity, dental problems, and possibly the onset of diabetes.

**Sweets & Gum** Sweets, candy, gum, toothpaste, baked goods, and some diet foods are sweetened with Xylitol. It can cause more insulin to circulate through your dog's body. That can cause his blood sugar to drop and can also cause liver failure. Initial symptoms include vomiting, lethargy, and loss of coordination. Eventually, he may have seizures. Liver failure can occur within just a few days.

**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 he ate it. As it swells inside, the dough can stretch a dog's abdomen and cause severe pain. In addition, when the yeast ferments the dough to make it rise, it makes alcohol that can lead to alcohol poisoning.

**Your Medicines** Reaction to a drug 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 your vet tells you to. Ingredients such as caffeine, paracetamol/acetaminophen or ibuprofen are often in pain relievers and cold medicine. And they can be deadly for your dog.