

# Foods Potentially Poisonous to Pets



Some foods that are considered good for people can be very dangerous for pets. The list below highlights some of the most common foods that can be dangerous to animals. This is not an exhaustive list and any decision to provide your pet with food not specifically intended for animals should be discussed with your veterinarian or pet nutritionist. For more information on foods that could be dangerous to pets, visit the American Animal Hospital Association website.

The following foods may be dangerous to your pet:

- Alcoholic beverages
- Apple seeds
- Apricot pits
- Avocados—toxic to birds, mice, rabbits, horses, cattle and dairy goats
- Cherry pits
- Candy (particularly chocolate, which is toxic to dogs, cats and ferrets, and any candy containing the sweetener Xylitol)
- Coffee (grounds, beans, chocolate covered espresso beans)
- Grapes
- Hops (used in home beer brewing)
- Macadamia nuts
- Moldy foods
- Mushroom plants
- Mustard seeds
- Onions and onion powder
- Peach pits
- Potato leaves and stems (green parts)
- Raisins
- Rhubarb leaves
- Salt
- Tea (caffeine)
- Tomato leaves and stems (green parts)
- Walnuts
- Yeast dough

*This information was compiled from various sources.*

## PREVENT POISONINGS

Have you taken inventory of your medicine cabinets lately? Are you properly storing lawn and garden pesticide containers? When you tidy up around the house, do you put food, liquor and tobacco products safely out of harm's way? These precautions are second nature to households with children, but homes with animals must be just as secure.

Aspirin and other pain relievers are in every home, and these poisonings can be severe. When aspirin is prescribed for animals, the dosage must be strictly followed. Too much aspirin can lead to anemia and gastric hemorrhage. Ibuprofen and naproxen will cause painful gastrointestinal problems. One 200mg ibuprofen tablet is toxic to a small dog.

**Never give acetaminophen to a cat or dog.** The drug affects cats' oxygen in the blood and it produces severe depression. It also produces abdominal pain in dogs. If not quickly eliminated from the body, just two extra-strength tablets in 24 hours will most likely kill a small pet. Clinical signs in cats develop within one or two hours and include excessive salivation, paw and facial swelling, depression, and ash-gray gums. In dogs watch for anorexia, vomiting, depression, and abdominal pain. High doses are usually fatal.

There are neurological poisons found in lawn and garden pesticides, insecticidal aerosols, dips and shampoos products. Signs of toxicity include apprehension, excessive salivation, urination, defecation, vomiting and diarrhea, excessive salivation, tremors, hyper-excitability or depression and pinpoint pupils. If an animal has absorbed enough of any neurological toxin, sudden death may be the only sign.

Coumarins, most recognizable as D-Con, a rat and mouse poison, affect the ability of the blood to clot. Mice that consume the poisoned grain essentially bleed to death. Your pets will be affected the same way, and the severity of the symptoms often depends on the amount ingested. Cats that eat poisoned mice can also become ill. If you find an empty box, look for labored breathing, anorexia, nosebleeds, bloody urine or feces and pinpoint hemorrhages on the gums.

Garbage is not often regarded as poisonous. However, toxins are produced by bacteria fermenting the garbage. Rapid and severe signs include vomiting, bloody diarrhea, painful abdominal distention, shivering, shock, and collapse.

How should pets be protected from these poisons? Some very simple rules to follow are:

- Properly dispose of and store all pesticide containers up and out of sight of your pets. Make sure the lids are tight, the containers undamaged.
- Use cords or locking lids for garbage cans. Put them in a heavy frame to prevent knock-down.
- Keep pets off lawns sprayed with chemicals. Consult with the lawn care company for proper information on drying time and compounds used. Wash pets' feet with mild soap and water if exposed.
- Keep your pets out of vegetable and flower gardens.
- Encase compost piles or use commercially made containers.
- Never assume that a human drug is applicable to an animal unless a *veterinarian* instructs you to use it.

### **What is poisonous?**

Here is a quick reference guide to the more common house and garden plants and foods that are toxic to most all animals and children. If you have these plants or foods, you need not dispose of them—just keep them away from pets and children. (\* substances are especially dangerous and can be fatal).

### **Cardiovascular Toxins**

Avocado (leaves, seeds, stem, skin)\*  
Azalea (entire rhododendron family)  
Autumn crocus (Colchicum autumnale)\*  
Bleeding heart\*  
Castor bean\*  
Foxglove (Digitalis)\*  
Kalanchoe\*  
Lily-of-the-valley\*  
Milkweed\*  
Mistletoe berries\*  
Mountain laurel  
Oleander \*  
Rosary Pea\*  
Yew\*

### **Gastrointestinal Toxins**

Amaryllis bulb\*  
Azalea (entire rhododendron family)  
Autumn crocus (Colchicum autumnale)\*  
Bird of Paradise  
Bittersweet  
Boxwood  
Buckeye  
Buttercup (Ranunculus)  
Caffeine  
Castor bean\*  
Chocolate \*  
Chrysanthemum (a natural source of pyrethrins)  
Clematis  
Crocus bulb  
Croton (Codiaeum sp.)  
Cyclamen bulb  
Dumb cane (Dieffenbachia)\*  
English ivy (All Hedera species of ivy)  
Garlic\*  
Hyacinth bulbs  
Holly berries  
Iris corms  
Lily (bulbs of most species)  
Marijuana or hemp (Cannabis)\*  
Narcissus, daffodil (Narcissus)  
Onions\*  
Pencil cactus/plant\*  
Potato (leaves and stem)  
Rosary Pea\*  
Spurge (Euphorbia sp.)  
Tomatoes (leaves and stem)

### **Respiratory Toxin**

Almonds\*  
Apricot\*  
Cherries\*  
Chinese sacred or heavenly bamboo\*  
Dumb cane (Dieffenbachia)\*

Elderberry, unripe berries\*  
Hydrangea\*  
Jimson weed\*  
Peaches\*

### **Neurological Toxins**

Alcohol (all beverages, ethanol, methanol, isopropyl)  
Amaryllis bulb\*  
Azalea (entire rhododendron family)  
Bracken fern  
Buckeye  
Caffeine  
Castor bean\*  
Chocolate\*  
Choke cherry, unripe berries\*  
Chrysanthemum (natural source of pyrethrins)  
Crocus bulb  
Delphinium, larkspur, monkshood\*  
Lupine species  
Marijuana or hemp (Cannabis)\*  
Mistletoe berries\*  
Morning glory\*  
Poinsettia  
Potato (leaves and stem)  
Rosary Pea\*  
Tomatoes (leaves and stem)

### **Kidney/Organ Failure Toxins**

Anthurium\*  
Begonia\*  
Caladium\*  
Calla lily\*  
Jack-in-the-pulpit\*  
Lantana\*  
Oak\*  
Philodendron\*  
Rhubarb leaves\*  
Schefflera\*  
Shamrock\*

If you suspect your animal may have ingested any of the substances on this list or if you pet shows any of the symptoms indicated below, you should contact your veterinarian immediately. Take a sample of the suspected toxin and its packaging with you to the veterinarian.



Feeding pets food that we enjoy is not only wrong, it can also be fatal. There are some foodstuffs that humans relish which cause illness and death if eaten by pets.

Chocolate, macadamia nuts and onions are good examples. Each of these foods contains chemicals which rarely cause problems for humans, but for dogs, these same chemicals can be deadly.

- [Chocolate toxicity](#)
- [Onion and garlic poisoning](#)
- [The danger of macadamia nuts](#)
- [Other potential dangers](#)
- [Related Products](#)

#### Chocolate toxicity [Top](#)

Chocolate contains theobromine, a compound that is a cardiac stimulant and a diuretic.

When affected by an overdose of chocolate, a dog can become excited and hyperactive. Due to the diuretic effect, it may pass large volumes of urine and it will be unusually thirsty. Vomiting and diarrhoea are also common. The effect of theobromine on the heart is the most dangerous effect. Theobromine will either increase the dog's heart rate or may cause the heart to beat irregularly. Death is quite possible, especially with exercise.

After their pet has eaten a large quantity of chocolate, many pet owners assume their pet is unaffected. However, the signs of sickness may not be seen for several hours, with death following within twenty-four hours.

Cocoa powder and cooking chocolate are the most toxic forms. A 10-kilogram dog can be seriously affected if it eats a quarter of a 250gm packet of cocoa powder or half of a 250gm block of cooking chocolate. These forms of chocolate contain ten times more theobromine than milk chocolate. Thus, a chocolate mud cake could be a real health risk for a small dog. Even licking a substantial part of the chocolate icing from a cake can make a dog unwell.

Semi-sweet chocolate and dark chocolate are the next most dangerous forms, with milk chocolate being the least dangerous. A dog needs to eat more than a 250gm block of milk chocolate to be affected. Obviously, the smaller the dog, the less it needs to eat.

#### Onion and garlic poisoning [Top](#)

Onions and garlic are other dangerous food ingredients that cause sickness in dogs, cats and also livestock. Onions and garlic contain the toxic ingredient thiosulphate. Onions are more of a danger.

Pets affected by onion toxicity will develop haemolytic anaemia, where the pet's red blood cells burst while circulating in its body.

At first, pets affected by onion poisoning show gastroenteritis with vomiting and diarrhoea. They will show no interest in food and will be dull and weak. The red pigment from the burst blood cells appears in an affected animal's urine and it becomes breathless. The breathlessness occurs because the red blood cells that carry oxygen through the body are reduced in number.

The poisoning occurs a few days after the pet has eaten the onion. All forms of onion can be a problem including dehydrated onions, raw onions, cooked onions and table scraps containing cooked onions and/or garlic. Left over pizza, Chinese dishes and commercial baby food containing onion, sometimes fed as a supplement to young pets, can cause illness.

Onion poisoning can occur with a single ingestion of large quantities or with repeated meals containing small amounts of onion. A single meal of 600 to 800 grams of raw onion can be dangerous whereas a ten-kilogram dog, fed 150 grams of onion for several days, is also likely to develop anaemia. The condition improves once the dog is prevented from eating any further onion

While garlic also contains the toxic ingredient thiosulphate, it seems that garlic is less toxic and large amounts would need to be eaten to cause illness.

The danger of macadamia nuts [Top](#)

Macadamia nuts are another concern. A recent paper written by Dr. Ross McKenzie, a Veterinary Pathologist with the Department of Primary Industries, points to the danger of raw and roasted macadamia nuts for pets.

The toxic compound is unknown but the affect of macadamia nuts is to cause locomotory difficulties. Dogs develop a tremor of the skeletal muscles, and weakness or paralysis of the hindquarters. Affected dogs are often unable to rise and are distressed, usually panting. Some affected dogs have swollen limbs and show pain when the limbs are manipulated.

Dogs have been affected by eating as few as six macadamia kernels (nuts without the shell) while others had eaten approximately forty kernels. Some dogs had also been given macadamia butter.

Luckily, the muscle weakness, while painful, seems to be of short duration and all dogs recovered from the toxicity. All dogs were taken to their veterinary surgeon.

Pets owners should not assume that human food is always safe for pets. When it comes to chocolate, onions, garlic and macadamia nuts, such foods should be given in only small quantities, or not at all. Be sure that your pets can't get into your stash of chocolates, that food scraps are disposed of carefully to prevent onion and garlic toxicity and that your dog is prevented from picking up macadamia nuts if you have a tree in your garden.

Other potential dangers [Top](#)

- Pear pips, the kernels of plums, peaches and apricots, apple core pips (contain cyanogenic glycosides resulting in cyanide poisoning)
- Potato peelings and green looking potatoes
- Rhubarb leaves
- Mouldy/spoiled foods
- Alcohol
- Yeast dough
- Coffee grounds, beans & tea (caffeine)
- Hops (used in home brewing)
- Tomato leaves & stems (green parts)
- Broccoli (in large amounts)
- Raisins and grapes
- Cigarettes, tobacco, cigars

Let's face it: some cats are inveterate "bums" and will beg and plead most appealingly while you try to eat. While I will (rarely) give a cat a tidbit of chicken or turkey from my plate, it's a practice I don't encourage as a regular habit for a few reasons. First, because cats need the nutrients specifically provided for them in good, premium cat foods, and any "extras" that they consume will take away their appetites for their regular meals. A sliver of turkey or chicken from your dinner plate certainly won't kill a cat, but you're helping him develop bad habits. What happens when Aunt Phoebe comes for dinner and Simon jumps on her lap to scarf up her meal? However, the main reason I'd discourage feeding cats "people food" is that there are a number of foods that are toxic to cats. You may have forgotten that the gravy slathered over your Thanksgiving turkey used broth that was flavored with onion, among other things. While it is tasty and harmless to humans, onions are very toxic to cats. The following is a list of foods that cats should **never** eat:

**Onions, Garlic, & Related Root Vegetables** Onions contain a substance (*N-propyl disulphide*) which destroys red blood cells in the cat, causing a form of anemia called *Heinz body anemia*. Garlic contains a similar substance in a lesser amount.

**Tomatoes, Green (raw Potatoes)** These foods are members of the Solanaceae family of plants, which includes the Deadly Nightshade, and contain a bitter, poisonous alkaloid called *Glycoalkaloid Solanine*, which can cause violent lower gastrointestinal symptoms. The Feline Future web site offers a rare description of a cat which was close to death from ingesting just one cherry tomato (See the link on the sidebar).

**Chocolate** It's becoming more widely known that chocolate is very toxic to both cats and dogs. Theobromine is the offending substance here. Janet Tobiassen Crosby, D.V.M. has an excellent article on the symptoms, effects, and treatment of [chocolate toxicity](#).

**Grapes and Raisins** These foods' toxicity has mainly been found in dogs, in quantities of varying amounts. The ASPCA advises: "As there are still many unknowns with the toxic potential of grapes and raisins, the ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center advises not giving grapes or raisins to pets in any amount." That's good enough for me.

**Milk** Although milk is not toxic to cats, it may have adverse effects. Simply put, adult cats fed a nutritious diet don't need milk, and many cats are lactose-intolerant, which means that the lactose in milk and milk products produces stomach upset, cramps, and gassiness. If your cat loves milk, and begs for it, a small amount of cream may be okay, two or three times a week. (The more fat in the milk, the less lactose.) Another compromise is [CatSip](#), a product made from skim milk with an enzyme added that helps the digestion of lactose. Catsip is available in supermarkets such as Safeway, Albertson's and A&P, as well as pet products chains, such as PetSmart and Petco.

These are the most commonly seen "people foods" that are potentially harmful to cats. The bottom link is to feed your cat nutritious food developed with his needs in mind and choose treats designed for cats instead of table scraps.

**If You Think Your Cat Has Been Poisoned** Contact your veterinarian or the ASPCA National Animal Poison Control Center at one of the numbers below

**1-900-443-0000** (\$45.00 per case. The charge is billed directly to caller's phone.)

**1-888-426-4435.** \$45.00 per case, credit card only.)

Follow-up calls can be made for no additional charge by dialing **888-299-2973**.

<http://cats.about.com/cs/catmanagement101/1/bltoxicplants.htm>

List of poisonous plants to cats and plant pics also

[http://www.peteducation.com/category\\_summary.cfm?cls=2&cat=1939](http://www.peteducation.com/category_summary.cfm?cls=2&cat=1939)

Toxic foods

[http://www.peteducation.com/category\\_summary.cfm?cls=2&cat=1938](http://www.peteducation.com/category_summary.cfm?cls=2&cat=1938)

Household items that are toxic

The ASPCA National Animal Poison Control Center hotline numbers are as follows:

- 1-900-443-0000 (\$55.00 per case). The charge is billed directly to the caller's phone.
- 1-888-4ANI-HELP or 1-888-426-4435 (\$55.00 per case). The charge is billed to caller's credit card only.

<http://www.peteducation.com/article.cfm?cls=2&cat=1684&articleid=1553>

List of plants

In the average home, there are dozens of foods and similar items that are hazardous and potentially deadly to dogs. Some foods, like chocolate, are well-known as a food that is toxic to dogs, while others are not quite as well-known.

According to Dr. Michael Levine, DVM, the following food-related items are among the most common poisonous foods for dogs.

### **Chocolate**

Chocolate is toxic to dogs, though a toxic dose will vary depending on factors like whether the dog ate the chocolate on an empty stomach, if the dog is particularly sensitive to chocolate, and the type of chocolate, since dark chocolate is more toxic, whereas milk chocolate less so, and white chocolate must be consumed in extremely large quantities to cause a serious problem.

Theobromine is the toxic ingredient in chocolate. Theobromine serves to stimulate the central nervous system, resulting in rapid heart rate, seizures, tremors, vomiting, diarrhea, drooling, panting and extremely fast pulse.

### **Grapes and Raisins**

Grapes and raisins are toxic for dogs. Grapes and raisins (which are dried grapes) will trigger acute renal (kidney) failure. They kidneys act as filters for toxins in the dog's body, therefore, when the kidneys are not functioning properly, toxins accumulate in the body and lead to death due to toxins. Urine production will also slow significantly or cease in cases of grape or raising toxicity in dogs, so this can suggest a very serious problem if observed in an animal who may have accessed grapes or raisins.

### **Onions and Garlic**

Onions and garlic can trigger a form of anemia where the body's red blood cells burst. This results in poor oxygen supply to the vital organs and tissues. When fed regularly in small doses, serious and potentially deadly nutritional deficiencies can also result. So dog owners should always check ingredients of prepared foods before offering these foods to pets. Baby food very often contains onion powder. So French onion soup and other food items containing onions and garlic should be crossed off the list of dog-safe foods.

### **Avocado**

Avocado fruit, pits, leaves and the actual plant are all potentially poisonous to dogs, along with other pets like cats, mice, rats, birds, rabbits, horses, cattle and goats, among others. Avocados will trigger fluid accumulation in the lungs and chest, leading to difficulty breathing and death due to oxygen deprivation. Fluid accumulation can also occur in the heart, pancreas and abdomen.

### **Tomatoes, Potatoes and Rhubarb**

Tomatoes, potatoes and rhubarb contain oxalates, which trigger abnormalities with the nervous system, kidneys and digestive tract. Especially toxic are green tomatoes, green potatoes, potato skins, and tomato leaves and plants, can trigger tremors, seizure and heart arrhythmia, so tomatoes should never be given to dogs.

### **Cat Food**

Cat food is very high in fats and protein and when ingested by a dog, particularly in large amounts or on a regular basis, the cat food can cause a bout of potentially deadly pancreatitis. It should be noted that all high-fat foods – particularly ham and bacon - have the ability to trigger pancreatitis, therefore pet owners should also use caution when offering table scraps that are high in fats.

### **Alcohol**

Dogs cannot tolerate alcohol, even in small amounts. And the hops in beer are also potentially toxic to dogs. Alcohol ingestion by dogs can result in intoxication, liver failure, coma, seizures and death.

### **Nuts**

Macadamia nuts and walnuts are toxic to dogs, and these foods can also trigger pancreatitis. Peanuts can trigger a deadly allergic reaction.

### **Mushrooms**

Mushrooms contain toxins that will trigger numerous organ systems, including the kidneys, liver and brain. Nervous system abnormalities, seizure, coma, vomiting, and death can all result when a dog ingests mushrooms.

Other miscellaneous foods that are toxic to dogs include: raw eggs and egg whites, raw fish, nutmeg, salt, tobacco, trash items, persimmons, marijuana, yeast and dough containing yeast, liver, marijuana, hops, human iron supplements and xylitol, which is contained in chewing gum and candies.

In the event of an emergency involving a pet who may have ingested a toxic food or other potentially deadly substance, pet owners should contact a veterinarian and/or an animal poison control hotline, such as the ASPCA Poison Control Center, which can be contacted by calling 888-426-4435.

Salt, chewing gum, cigarettes: all of these food-related items and many more can be toxic to a dog. Learn what dangers and dog poisons lie in the home.

There's an array of food-related items in the average kitchen and home that pose potential dangers to dogs. Chewing gum, salt, trash items, tobacco – items located in the kitchen and home that aren't traditional food items, per se – can be acutely toxic to dogs when ingested.

Dr. Michael Levine, DVM, recently offered information on the following poison food-like items that are commonly involved in dog poisoning incidents.

### **Xylitol**

Xylitol is a potentially deadly toxin for dogs, as it creates sudden drops in blood sugar that can lead to seizure and death. Xylitol is contained in chewing gum and candy as a sweetener, so it's vital to keep dogs from accessing candy and gum packages. One common scenario involves the dog who raids his owner's purse or backpack, accessing the potentially toxic chewing gum, so use caution any time you have gum in the home.

### **Trash Items**

Trash should be secured in an inaccessible location, such as in the cabinet under the sink, or in a trash compactor. Potentially deadly or toxic food items should be disposed of in a covered outdoor trash barrel. Potato trimmings and potato eyes are deadly and damage the nervous system and kidneys. Apple Seeds contain potentially deadly arsenic. Moldy foods can contain toxins. Bones can cause intestinal obstructions. Cherry pits, cherry leaves, peach pits, avocado pits, apple cores can also be toxic or potentially dangerous to the digestive system. And fat trimmings from meat can cause a bout of potentially-deadly pancreatitis.

### **Salt**

Salt, when ingested in large amounts or on a regular basis, can cause kidney failure and imbalances in a dog's electrolyte levels. Notably, small amounts of salt can be safely utilized to induce vomiting in the event that other items used to induce vomiting – like hydrogen peroxide – are not available.

### **Tobacco**

Tobacco contains nicotine, which in large amounts is toxic. So if a dog ingests even just a few cigarettes, this can lead to nervous system effects, vomiting, tremors, coma and death. Notably, even a human will die from nicotine toxicity from eating as few as 15 cigarettes.

### **Caffeine**

Caffeine is potentially toxic to dogs. Like theobromine in chocolate, caffeine toxicity over-stimulates the central nervous system. So keep items like soda, coffee, coffee grounds, coffee beans, and caffeinated tea out of a pet's reach.

Other common foods that are toxic and poisonous to dogs include grapes, raisins, chocolate, avocado, garlic, onions, chocolate, tomatoes, potatoes, rhubarb, macadamia nuts, walnuts, mushrooms, raw eggs, and liver.

# Acetaminophen

Veterinary & Aquatic Services Department, Drs. Foster & Smith, Inc.

## Toxin

Acetaminophen

## Source

Tylenol, Allerest, Anacin-3, Comtrex, Dayquil, Nyquil, SineAid, SineOff, Vanquish, and numerous other products that contain acetaminophen.

## General Information

In the body, acetaminophen is changed into glucuronic acid and sulfate. A small amount is normally **oxidized** to reactive metabolites. These reactive compounds are normally bound by glutathione and excreted from the body. At elevated doses, the supply of glutathione becomes exhausted allowing the reactive metabolite to bind to cells causing cell death. The cat produces less glutathione than the dog, making the cat more susceptible to poisoning with acetaminophen. The liver and red blood cells are most frequently affected by acetaminophen. In red blood cells, **hemoglobin** is changed to methemoglobin, and the cell can no longer adequately deliver oxygen to other cells in the body.

## Toxic Dose

Dogs: 45 mg per pound of body weight.

Cats: 22 mg per pound of body weight.

## Signs

Dogs: Symptoms begin within hours of ingestion. They include depression (progressive), vomiting, abdominal pain, dark-colored urine and **serum**, and death in 2-5 days.

Cats: Symptoms begin within hours of ingestion. They include lack of appetite, drooling, vomiting, depression, blood in the urine, brown or blue **mucous membranes** without difficulty breathing, dark chocolate-colored blood and urine, **edema** of face and paws, and death in 18-36 hours.

## Immediate Action

Induce vomiting. Seek veterinary attention immediately.

## Veterinary Care

**General treatment:** The induction of vomiting may be continued, **gastric lavage** is performed, and **activated charcoal** is administered.

**Supportive treatment:** IV fluids, oxygen, and blood transfusions are given as necessary.

**Specific treatment:** Vitamin C is given to help convert **methemoglobin** to oxyhemoglobin, thus increasing the oxygen carrying capacity of the red blood cells. **Acetylcysteine** is given to replenish the depleted glutathione.

## Prognosis

Cats: Guarded to poor.

Dogs: Slightly more favorable.

# Antihistamines and Decongestants

Veterinary & Aquatic Services Department, Drs. Foster & Smith, Inc.

## Toxin

Antihistamines and decongestants.

## Source

Diphenhydramine (Benadryl, Somnex, Nytol, Sleep-Eze, various cough preparations), clemastine (Tavist), brompheniramine and chlorpheniramine (Chlor-Trimeton and various cough preparations), dimenhydrinate (Dramamine), meclizine (Bonine), cyclizine (Marezine), terfenadine (Seldane), hydroxyzine (Atarax, Vistaril), and loratidine (Claritin).

## General Information

Histamines are released by body tissues during an allergic reaction and if injuries to certain cells during infections. Antihistamines block the attachment of histamine to cells and help to reduce the effects of histamine.

## Toxic Dose

Varies depending upon the product.

## Signs

Common signs may range from depression with respiratory problems to hyperexcitability with muscle tremors, seizures, and hyperactivity. Vomiting, dilated pupils, increased body temperature, disorientation, heart rhythm abnormalities, and increased or decreased heart rate may be seen.

## Immediate Action

Induce vomiting if patient is alert. Seek veterinary attention.

## Veterinary Care

**General treatment:** The induction of vomiting may be continued, gastric lavage is performed, and activated charcoal is administered.

**Supportive treatment:** Medications are administered to control seizures and heart rhythm abnormalities. Hyperthermia, if present, is treated. IV fluids are administered. Antihistamines are excreted through the kidneys so good urine production is necessary.

**Specific treatment:** Unavailable.

## Prognosis

Good

# Iron

Veterinary & Aquatic Services Department, Drs. Foster & Smith, Inc.

## Toxin

Iron

## Source

Nutritional supplements such as vitamin-mineral preparations with iron, injections of iron, and plant fertilizer.

## General Information

Ingestion of excess iron causes two main problems. Iron has a direct corrosive effect on the lining of the stomach and small intestines. This may range from slight bleeding to perforation. Iron also is absorbed into the cells where it disrupts cell function and causes cell damage.

An **anaphylactic** type of reaction may be seen with injectable iron.

## Toxic Dose

Varies depending on source and route of exposure.

## Signs

Vomiting and diarrhea which may be bloody, and drowsiness. Symptoms may not occur for up to 6-12 hours after ingestion. This may be followed by a period of apparent recovery before relapse occurs. Other symptoms include **CNS** depression and liver and kidney failure. Iron passed in the urine will cause the urine to be dark.

## Immediate Action

Induce vomiting and administer Milk of Magnesia (to precipitate the iron in the **GI** tract to decrease absorption). Egg, water, or milk may also be given. Seek veterinary attention.

## Veterinary Care

**General treatment:** The induction of vomiting may be continued, **gastric lavage** is performed, and Milk of Magnesia is administered.

**Supportive treatment:** **IV** fluids, oxygen, and blood transfusions may be administered. Iron levels will be monitored for several days.

**Specific treatment:** Deferoxamine (Desferal) may be administered which **chelates** the iron. This chelation will cause a reddish brown discoloration of the urine. Vitamin C may be used with deferoxamine to enhance iron chelation, but should not be used without deferoxamine as it will increase the absorption of the iron by the body.

## Prognosis

Variable

# Marijuana

Veterinary & Aquatic Services Department, Drs. Foster & Smith, Inc.

## Toxin

Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC)

## Source

Hashish, marijuana, and hemp, *Cannabis*.

## General Information

Pets are more commonly poisoned from marijuana through ingestion other than inhalation. THC is the toxin that causes the symptoms and is absorbed quickly after ingestion. THC has strong **antiemetic** effects which make it difficult to successfully induce vomiting to remove the toxin from the pet. Most animals will recover, but it may take 1-3 days.

## Toxic Dose

Depends on the concentration of THC and the form of marijuana ingested.

## Signs

**Ataxia**, dilated pupils, 'glazed' eyes, drop in body temperature, increase or decrease in heart rate, bizarre behavior, **hyperesthesia**, disorientation, **somnolence**, depression (may last 18-36 hours), **coma**, excitation is seen occasionally, drooling, tremors, **respiratory depression**, or death.

## Immediate Action

Induce vomiting. Seek veterinary attention.

## Veterinary Care

**General treatment:** The induction of vomiting may be continued, **gastric lavage** is performed, and **activated charcoal** is administered.

**Supportive treatment:** The temperature, pulse, and respiration are monitored and different medications are given depending upon the signs present. A safe environment should be provided where the pet cannot hurt itself or others while disorientated.

**Specific treatment:** Unavailable. To confirm the diagnosis, urine levels of THC can be determined in the laboratory.

## Prognosis

Fair

# Nonsteroidal Anti-inflammatory Drugs (NSAIDs)

Veterinary & Aquatic Services Department, Drs. Foster & Smith, Inc.

## Toxin

Nonsteroidal Anti-inflammatory Drugs

## Source

Many analgesics, fever medications, and anti-inflammatory medications such as ibuprofen (Motrin, Advil, Nuprin, Vick's DayQuil), indomethacin, piroxicam (Feldene), phenylbutazone (Bute and Butazolidin), and naproxen (Naprosyn and Aleve). Veterinary NSAIDs include products such as Aspirin, carprofen (Rimadyl), ketoprofen, and etodolac (EtoGesic).

## General Information

Always check with your veterinarian before giving any medication to your pet. Many medications available for human use are dangerous to pets. The NSAIDs are an example of this especially in cats. NSAIDs decrease production of substances that protect the stomach and GI tract from the acid and reduces blood flow to the area. This can cause ulceration and perforation of the stomach or intestines. NSAIDs also decrease the blood flow to the kidneys causing damage and renal failure. Phenylbutazone may also cause liver damage.

## Toxic Dose

Varies with each medication and species. Example: Ibuprofen is toxic at 22-50 mg per pound of body weight.

## Signs

Abdominal pain, anemia, blood in the stool (blood may be digested so the stool appears black and tarry), vomiting with or without blood, lethargy, ataxia, stupor, and shock if perforation has occurred.

## Immediate Action

Induce vomiting. Seek veterinary attention.

## Veterinary Care

**General treatment:** The induction of vomiting may be continued, gastric lavage is performed, and activated charcoal is administered.

**Supportive treatment:** IV fluids are administered to try to protect the kidneys and treat for shock. Medications such as Sucralfate and misoprostol are administered in an effort to try to prevent formation of gastric ulcers. Repeated blood tests will be performed to monitor the function of kidneys and liver.

**Specific treatment:** Unavailable.

## Prognosis

Guarded to poor.

## Poisonous Flowers

Amaryllis	stomach upset, lethargy, shock, death
Crocus	stomach upset, liver failure, lethargy, shock, death
Buttercup	stomach upset
Calla Lily	stomach upset, mouth irritation, asphyxiation, seizures, Death
Christmas Rose	stomach upset, diarrhea, convulsions
Chrysanthemum	skin irritation
Daffodil (bulb)	stomach upset, tremours, seizures, lethargy, heart Failure, Death
Easter Lily	stomach upset, kidney failure
Foxglove	stomach upset, tremours, seizures, lethargy, heart Failure, Death
Hyacinth (bulb)	varied effects
Iris (root)	stomach upset
Jessamine	seizures, respiratory failure
Morning Glory	stomach upset, hallucinations
Narcissus	stomach upset, staggering, tremours, seizures, heart failure, death
Peony	stomach upset, staggering, tremours, seizures, heart failure, death
Periwinkle	hallucinogen
Poinsetta	stomach upset, mouth irritation
Primrose	stomach upset
Tulip (bulb)	varied effects

## Trees and Vines

Names	Symptoms
<b>Apple</b> (stem and leaves)	shock, mouth inflammation, rapid increase in breathing
Yew (American, English, Western)	Diarrhea, vomiting, abdominal pain
<b>Apricot</b>	Diarrhea, vomiting, abdominal pain
Almond	Diarrhea, vomiting, abdominal pain
Peach	Diarrhea, vomiting, abdominal pain
<b>Wild Cherry</b>	Diarrhea, vomiting, abdominal pain
<b>Japanese Plum</b>	Diarrhea, vomiting, abdominal pain
<b>Ficus</b> (Cuban Laurel)	stomach upset
<b>Cherry</b>	rapid breathing, shock, mouth inflammation, heart rate increase
Balsam Pear	Diarrhea, vomiting, abdominal pain
Ficus Lyrata (Fiddle-Leaf)	stomach upset, irritated skin
Oak	Varied effects
Philodendron (Devil's Ivy)	upset stomach, convulsions, asphyxiation, death
<b>English Ivy</b>	stomach upset, hyperactivity, laboured breath, drooling, Fever, thirst increase, pupil dilation, staggering
Jasmine	convulsions, death
Vine	pupil dilation, upset stomach, drooling, heart failure
Matrimony Vine	varied effects
Virginia Creeper	varied effects

## Houseplants

Names	Symptoms
Asparagus Fern	vomiting, respiratory problems, kidney failure, tremours, abdominal pain
Caladium	mouth irritation, stomach upset, asphyxiation, tremours, seizures, death

<b><u>Colocasia (Elephant's Ear)</u></b>	mouth irritation, stomach upset, asphyxiation, tremours, seizures, death
<b><u>Deiffenbachia (Dumb Cane)</u></b>	mouth irritation, stomach upset, asphyxiation, tremours, seizures, death
Philodendron (Saddle Leaf, Split Leaf)	Mouth swelling, irritation
Poinsetta	mouth irritation, stomach upset
<b><u>Mum (Pot and Spider)</u></b>	Skin irritation
Umbrella Plant	vomiting, respiratory problems, kidney failure, tremours, abdominal pain
Aloe Vera	diarrhea
Mistletoe	Varied effects

## Common Household Toxins

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Item	Symptoms
<b>Antifreeze</b>	Depression, stumbling, staggering, vomiting, and seizures
<b>Acetaminophen (Tylenol)</b>	Excessive drooling, vomiting, weakness and abdominal pain
<b>Insecticides</b>	Excessive drooling, weeping eyes, excessive urination, diarrhea, muscle spasms, weakness, difficulty breathing and collapse
<b>Household Cleaners (toilet bowl cleaners, pine oil cleaner, bleach, detergents)</b>	Skin irritation, vomiting, diarrhea, internal organ damage, bloody vomit, bloody stools
<b>Flea products</b>	Decreased appetite, depression, vomiting, diarrhea, excessive drooling

## Toxic Foods and Plants for Dogs



There are various foods that are toxic to dogs. Unfortunately, there are many we are not often aware of that are just as dangerous. Below is a list of common foods that are harmful to dogs.

### **Toxic Foods:**

#### **Chocolate/Caffeine:**

Chocolate contains theobromine, a compound that is a cardiac stimulant and a diuretic.

After their pet has eaten a large quantity of chocolate, many pet owners assume their pet is unaffected. However, the signs of sickness may not be seen for several hours, with death following within twenty-four hours. Symptoms include Staggering, labored breathing, vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain, tremors, fever, heart rate increase, arrhythmia, seizures, coma, death.

Cocoa powder and cooking chocolate are the most toxic forms. A 10-kilogram dog can be seriously affected if it eats a quarter of a 250gm packet of cocoa powder or half of a 250gm block of cooking chocolate. These forms of chocolate contain ten times more theobromine than milk chocolate. Thus, a chocolate mud cake could be a real health risk for a small dog. Even licking a substantial part of the chocolate icing from a cake can make a dog unwell.

Semi-sweet chocolate and dark chocolate are the next most dangerous forms, with milk chocolate being the least dangerous. A dog needs to eat more than a 250gm block of milk chocolate to be affected. Obviously, the smaller the dog, the less it needs to eat.

#### **Onions/Garlic:**

Onions and garlic contain the toxic ingredient thiosulphate. Onions are more of a danger.

Pets affected by onion toxicity will develop haemolytic anaemia, where the pet's red blood cells burst while circulating in its body. Symptoms include Hemolytic Anemia, labored breathing, liver damage, vomiting, diarrhea, discolored urine.

The poisoning occurs a few days after the pet has eaten the onion. All forms of onion can be a problem including dehydrated onions, raw onions, cooked onions and table scraps containing cooked onions and/or garlic. Left over pizza, Chinese dishes and commercial baby food containing onion, sometimes fed as a supplement to young pets, can cause

illness.

While garlic also contains the toxic ingredient thiosulphate, it seems that garlic is less toxic and large amounts would need to be eaten to cause illness.

### **Mushrooms:**

Mushroom toxicity does occur in dogs and it can be fatal if certain species of mushrooms are eaten. Amanita phalloides is the most commonly reported severely toxic species of mushroom in the US but other Amanita species are toxic. Symptoms include Abdominal pain, drooling, liver damage, kidney damage, vomiting diarrhea, convulsions, coma, death

### **Grapes/Raisins:**

As few as a handful of raisins or grapes can make a dog ill; however, of the 10 cases reported to the ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center (APCC), each dog ingested between 9 ounces and 2 pounds of grapes or raisins. Symptoms include vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain, and lethargy.

### **Macadamia Nuts:**

Macadamia nuts are another concern, along with most other kinds of nuts. Their high phosphorus content is said to possibly lead to bladder stones. Dogs develop a tremor of the skeletal muscles, and weakness or paralysis of the hindquarters. Affected dogs are often unable to rise and are distressed, usually panting. Some affected dogs have swollen limbs and show pain when the limbs are manipulated.

**NOTE:** Pets owners should not assume that human food is always safe for pets. When it comes to chocolate, onions, garlic and macadamia nuts, such foods should be given in only small quantities, or not at all. Be sure that your pets can't get into your stash of chocolates, that food scraps are disposed of carefully to prevent onion and garlic toxicity and that your dog is prevented from picking up macadamia nuts if you have a tree in your garden.

### **Baby Food:**

Can contain onion powder, which can be toxic to dogs. Can also result in nutritional deficiencies, if fed in large amounts.

### **Bones from fish, poultry, or other meat sources:**

Can cause obstruction or laceration of the digestive system.

### **Cat Food:**

Cat food is generally too high in protein and fats.

### **Fat Trimmings:**

Can cause pancreatitis.

### **Milk and other dairy products:**

Some adult dogs and cats do not have sufficient amounts of the enzyme lactase, which breaks down the lactose in milk. This can result in diarrhea. Lactose-free milk products are available for pets.

**Raw Eggs:**

Contain an enzyme called avidin, which decreases the absorption of biotin (a B vitamin). This can lead to skin and hair coat problems. Raw eggs may also contain Salmonella.

**Raw Fish:**

Can result in a thiamine (a B vitamin) deficiency leading to loss of appetite, seizures, and in severe cases, death. More common if raw fish is fed regularly.

**Toxic Plants:**

As we let our dogs roam freely in and out of the house, we need to be aware of what we are exposing our pets to. There are various plants that are poisonous to dogs both inside and outside of our homes. Below is a chart of some of the more common plants our dogs may come in contact with.

PLANT	TOXIC PART	SYMPTOMS
<b>HOUSE PLANTS</b>		
Hyacinth, Narcissus, Daffodil	Bulbs	Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea. May be fatal.
Oleander	Leaves, branches	Extremely poisonous. Affects the heart, produces severe digestive upset and has caused death.
Dieffenbachia (Dumb Cane), Elephant Ear	All parts	Intense burning and irritation of the mouth and tongue. Death can occur if base of the tongue swells enough to block the air passage of the throat.
Rosary Pea, Castor Bean	Seeds	Fatal. A single Rosary Pea seed has caused death. One or two Castor Bean seeds are near the lethal dose for adults.
<b>FLOWER AND GARDEN</b>		
Larkspur	Young plant, seeds	Digestive upset, nervous excitement, depression. May be fatal.
Monkshood	Fleshy roots	Digestive upset and nervous excitement.
Autumn Crocus, Star of Bethlehem	Bulbs	Vomiting and nervous excitement.
Iris	Underground stems	Severe-but not usually serious-digestive upset.
Lily-of-the-Valley	Leaves, flowers	Irregular heart beat and pulse, usually accompanied by digestive upset and mental confusion.
Foxglove	Leaves	Large amounts cause dangerously irregular heartbeat and pulse, usually digestive upset and mental confusion. May be fatal.
Bleeding Heart	Foliage, roots	May be poisonous in large amounts. Has proved fatal to cattle.
<b>VEGETABLE GARDEN</b>		
Rhubarb	Leaf blade	Fatal. Large amounts of raw or cooked leaves can cause convulsions, coma, followed rapidly by death.
<b>ORNAMENTAL</b>		
Daphne	Berries	Fatal.
Wisteria	Seeds, pods	Mild to severe digestive upset.
Golden Chain	Bean-like capsules in which the seeds are suspended	Severe poisoning. Excitement, staggering, convulsions and coma. May be fatal.
Laureals, Rhododendrons, Azaleas	All parts	Fatal. Produces nausea and vomiting, depression, difficult breathing, prostration and coma.
Yew	Berries, foliage	Fatal. Foliage more toxic than berries. Death is usually sudden without warning symptoms.
Jasmine	Berries	Fatal.
Lantana Camara (Red Sage)	Green berries	Fatal. Affects lungs, kidneys, heart and nervous system. Grows in the southern U.S. And in moderate climates.
<b>TREES AND SHRUBS</b>		
Wild and cultivated cherries	Twigs, foliage	Fatal. Contains a compound that releases cyanide when eaten. Gasping, excitement and prostration are common symptoms.
Oaks	Foliage, acorns	Affects kidneys gradually. Symptoms appear only after several days or weeks. Takes a large amount for poisoning.
Elderberry	All parts, especially roots	Nausea and digestive upset.
Black Locust	Bark, sprouts, foliage	Nausea, weakness
<b>WOODS IDEAS</b>		

