

# Things dogs shouldn't eat!

Can a little reward from the table really hurt your dog?

Well, that depends on what it is and what's in it.

## 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.

## 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 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.

## 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.

## 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 can also cause liver failure. Initial symptoms include vomiting, lethargy, and loss of coordination. Eventually, the dog may have seizures. **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, chocolate mulch, and unsweetened baking chocolate. Eating chocolate, **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, 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.

### **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.

### **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 is an early sign. 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.

### **Macadamia Nuts**

Dogs should not eat macadamia nuts or foods containing macadamia nuts because **they can be fatal**. As few as six 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, 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 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).

### **Onions and Garlic**

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

### **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 if raw eggs are fed for a long time.

### **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" or "salmon poisoning disease."** If not treated, the disease can be fatal within two 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 possibly the onset of 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**.

### **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.

### **About Eating Grass**

Your lawn may not look yummy to you, but your dog has other ideas. Dogs aren't just meat eaters.

Sometimes they like a little greenery, too. Eating grass, sticks, and even dirt is normal -- as long as they don't do it a lot. If your dog binges on grass, it could mean stomach problems. Call your vet to check.