

Halloween Treats Can Harm Pets

Halloween is right around the corner, and as this sweet holiday approaches now is the perfect time to discuss one of the most common toxicities we see in our pets year round- chocolate.

Most everyone knows that chocolate is not safe to give our pets, dog and cat alike. The good thing is most cats are too finicky of eaters to consume it, however the same cannot be said for our canine friends. The active ingredient in chocolate that creates large problems is called theobromine, related to caffeine. Baking chocolate is by far the worst for our pets, followed by semisweet and dark chocolates, then milk chocolate, and lastly chocolate flavored human treats. Even small ingestions can lead to gastrointestinal upset such as vomiting, diarrhea, belly pain and decreased appetite. However, when consumed in larger amounts, or even a small amount depending on the type of chocolate eaten, other signs can result as a consequence of excitation of the nervous and cardiac systems. These signs include restlessness, twitching or muscle tremors, panting, elevated heart rate, elevated blood pressure, and even seizures.

If your pet has recently ingested any form of chocolate, making your dog vomit may be enough based on the time since consumption and the type of chocolate ingested. Your local veterinary office or emergency clinic can make recommendations to help you know how and where to induce vomiting, and if further therapy is needed. In cases where a pet is showing signs of chocolate toxicity, they can also initiate treatment and contact an animal poison control center for guidance with further care. If you have any concern about a recent chocolate ingestion by your pet, please contact your veterinary hospital and/or the ASPCA National Animal Poison Control Center at 1-888-426 4435 or Pet Poison Helpline at 1-800-213-6680.