

CHOCOLATE TOXICITY

Treat or... a trip to emergency?

Chocolate toxicity is a major issue at this time of year. Unfortunately a lot of candy and chocolates from the kids' candy bags end up hidden around bedrooms from siblings and parents. This is a great strategy to keep people from finding Halloween treats but we all know what great noses dogs have and how easily it can get them in trouble.

Cats are susceptible to chocolate poisoning too, although they are more fussy and eat a lot less than dogs.

Chocolate contains Theobromine and Caffeine, both of which are harmful and in some cases fatal to dogs. Both components affect the Central Nervous System, increase heart rate and blood pressure and can cause nausea and vomiting. The human digestive system is much more efficient at breaking down and excreting the theobromine, which is why it isn't harmful to us.

Different types of chocolate contain different amounts of Caffeine and Theobromine. Generally, the darker the chocolate the higher the levels, although no chocolate is Theobromine free and therefore ALL chocolate is bad for dogs.

Signs of Chocolate Toxicity are: Excitement/anxiety/shaking, Vomiting/diarrhea, Excessive thirst/excessive urination, Muscle spasms/twitching, Seizures, Coma (rare), Death (rare- usually a result of heart arrhythmia)

What to do:

If they have just eaten the chocolate it's important that we make them vomit it back up, quickly! You generally have a half an hour window to achieve this so get to the nearest veterinary clinic immediately! All good clinics have medication on site which promotes vomiting but always call to check, time is of the essence! If you come home and discover your dog has been feasting while you were at work it's important to get them to a hospital right away. Chocolate can cause an immediate onset of kidney failure which may not be apparent just by looking at your dog. The kidney will degenerate 70% of it's function by the time your dog looks 'unwell' so get them to a hospital fast!

Blood tests and medication may be needed to diagnose and treat the effects of chocolate toxicity. Both can be expensive depending on the severity of the poisoning and the quantity that was eaten.

The best thing you can do to ensure your pet doesn't suffer from chocolate toxicity is to keep all chocolate out of their reach, or do what we do and just eat it all so there's none left for them. ;)



CHOCOLATE TOXICITY CHART

Milk Chocolate (60 - 66 mg/oz or 2.12 - 2.33 mg/gram of methylxanthines)

Weight	Mild Reaction	Moderate to Severe Reaction
5 lbs	0.75 oz	1.5 oz
10 lbs	1.5 oz	3.0 oz
20 lbs	3.0 oz	6.0 oz
30 lbs	4.5 oz	9.0 oz
40 lbs	6.0 oz	12.0 oz
50 lbs	7.5 oz	15.0 oz
60 lbs	9.0 oz	18.0 oz
70 lbs	10.5 oz	21.0 oz
80 lbs	12.0 oz	24.0 oz

Semi Sweet Chocolate (150 mg/oz or 5.29 mg/gram of methylxanthines)

Weight	Mild Reaction	Moderate to Severe Reaction
5 lbs	0.3 oz	0.6 oz
10 lbs	0.6 oz	1.2 oz
20 lbs	1.2 oz	2.4 oz
30 lbs	1.9 oz	3.6 oz
40 lbs	2.1 oz	4.2 oz
50 lbs	2.5 oz	5.0 oz
60 lbs	3.8 oz	7.6 oz
70 lbs	4.2 oz	8.5 oz
80 lbs	4.8 oz	9.6 oz

Baking Chocolate (~450 mg/oz or 15.87 mg/gram of methylxanthines)

Weight	Mild Reaction	Moderate to Severe Reaction
5 lbs	0.1 oz	0.2 oz
10 lbs	0.2 oz	0.4 oz
20 lbs	0.4 oz	0.8 oz
30 lbs	0.6 oz	1.2 oz
40 lbs	0.8 oz	1.6 oz
50 lbs	1.0 oz	2.0 oz
60 lbs	1.2 oz	2.4 oz
70 lbs	1.4 oz	2.8 oz
80 lbs	1.6 oz	3.2 oz