

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
HOUSE PLANTS		
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.
FLOWER AND GARDEN		
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.
VEGETABLE GARDEN		
Rhubarb	Leaf blade	Fatal. Large amounts of raw or cooked leaves can cause convulsions, coma, followed rapidly by death.
ORNAMENTAL		
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.
TREES AND SHRUBS		
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
WOODED AREAS		
Jack-in-the-Pulpit	All parts, especially roots	Like Dumb Cane, contains small needle-like crystals of calcium oxalate that cause intense irritation and burning of the mouth and tongue.
Moonseed	Berries	Blue, purple color, resembling wild grapes. May be fatal.
Mayapple	Apple, foliage, roots	Contains at least 16 active toxic principles, primarily in the roots.
Mistletoe	Berries	Fatal
MOIST AREAS		
Water Hemlock	All parts	Fatal. Violent and painful convulsions.
PLANTS IN FIELDS		
Buttercups	All parts	Irritant juices may severely injure the digestive system.
Nightshade	All parts, especially the unripened berry	Fatal. Intense digestive disturbance and nervous symptoms.
Poison Hemlock	All parts	Fatal. Resembles a large wild carrot.
Jimson Weed (Thorn Apple)	All parts	Abnormal thirst, distorted sight, delirium, incoherence and coma. Common cause of poisoning. Has proved fatal.

Holiday Plants:

Pet owners need to take extra care with holiday plants. When the holidays roll around, we often get caught up in the festivities and don't realize that we may be bringing something very dangerous into your home for your pets. be aware of what holiday decorations may be toxic and avoid turning a happy occasion into a tragic one.

Poinsettias:

These plants are probably the most popular holiday plant and are easily recognizable by their large red, white, pink, or mottled leaves. These plants also contain a thick, milky irritant sap. In general, it would take ingestion of a large amount of this plant to see possible clinical signs in your pet. Signs could include vomiting, anorexia and depression. The symptoms are generally self-limiting and treatment is rarely needed. Your Vet may recommend limiting food and water intake for 1 or 2 hours if your pet is suspected of becoming sick after ingestion of poinsettias.

Easter Lilies:

Some members of the Lilly family of plants can result in serious illness in cats. Specifically, Easter Lilies, tiger lilies, Japanese show lilies, rubrum lilies, many lily hybrids and day lilies have been known to cause kidney failure.