



Christmas No No's for Your Pet

Dietary indiscretions can be expensive and fatal to your pet and are bad anytime of year, but are much more common during the Christmas and New Year holiday. Not only is the household member more tempted but frequent guests often deem it alright to slip people treats to the household pets. Below is a short list of common holiday foods which may cause big problems to our pets.

- 1) **Alcohol:** In addition to alcoholic drinks, alcohol can be found in cakes, candies and dressings. Alcohol is also a major by product of ingested yeast-bread dough. Even small amounts of alcohol , especially when ingested by small pets, can cause life-threatening toxicity.
- 2) **Caffeine:** It is most commonly found in coffee, coffee grounds, tea, tea bags, soda, energy drinks and diet pills. A couple of laps of tea, coffee or soda won't poison most pets. Moderate amounts of coffee grounds, tea bags, or one to two diet pills can be fatal in small animals. Pets are more sensitive to the effect of caffeine than people. Theobromine, a cousin chemical to caffeine, is also found in chocolate.
- 3) **Chocolate:** When it comes to chocolate, dark means dangerous. This is because the darker the chocolate, the larger amount of theobromine it contains. Thus, baker's chocolate, semi-sweet chocolate, cocoa powder, and gourmet dark chocolate are more toxic than milk chocolate. White chocolate has very little theobromine and will not cause poisoning in pets. The ingestion of baker's chocolate can result in poisoning and are considered emergencies. The high fat in all chocolate causes some pets to develop pancreatitis.
- 4) **Fatty Foods:** Ingesting foods with butter, oils, meat drippings, grease, chocolate, and meat scraps will cause pancreatitis. Pancreatitis can be acute (sudden) or chronic (long standing), and requires hospitalization, long term changes in diet and death in our pets. Schnauzers are particularly likely to develop pancreatitis.
- 5) **Grapes, Raisins and Currants:** These fruits are more toxic uncooked than cooked. Don't forget about raisins in cereal, trail mixes, baked goods and snack boxes. These fruits can cause sudden kidney failure in dogs, cats and ferrets. In small dogs only a few grapes, raisins or currants are considered an emergency. Kidney failure is irreversible and the prognosis is bad.
- 6) **Onion, Garlic, Chives and Leeks:** Small amounts of garlic is sometimes found in dog treats to enhance flavor and these small amounts are not harmful. Larger amounts of these vegetables can cause red blood cell destruction (anemia). Cats and Japanese breeds of dogs (Akita, Shiba Inu) are very sensitive to these plants.
- 7) **Xylitol:** This is a common sugar substitute used in sugar-free chewing gum, breath mints, candies and baked goods. Non-toxic small amounts are found in dental plaque fighting products. Xylitol causes a life-threatening drop in blood sugar and causes liver damage in dogs. Cats and people do not experience this problem. A 10 pound dog would only have to eat one piece of gum or one breath mint to achieve a potentially toxic dose. Within 10 to 15 minutes of ingestion, a dog may develop hypoglycemia (low blood sugar) and die without treatment

The advice from veterinarians at Arcanum Veterinary Service is to avoid 100% of these 7 toxic substances and stay with foods and treats made for your pets.

