

FOODS YOUR PETS SHOULD AVOID

If your pets are anything like mine, they may come off as omnivores. My Akita mix is likely to eat anything that does not eat him first. One of my cats has acquired a taste for tomato bisque and all of my dogs enjoy green pepper, zucchini and lettuce. As for my horse, she would drink all of my beer if she had the chance.

There is not much harm in feeding our pets human foods. However, there are some foods that our animal friends should definitely avoid. In addition to foods, certain plants can be downright deadly for our pets.

Chocolate and Pets Do Not Mix

Chocolate has long been considered a human food that dogs should avoid, and with good reason. Chocolate contains a chemical known as theobromine. Theobromine is similar in chemical composition to caffeine and is tolerated by humans in small amounts and is used as a therapeutic drug for certain medical conditions. Like many types of stimulate chemicals, theobromine can be harmful to humans to large doses. When it comes to animals, theobromine poses a significant health risk.

Though the danger to dogs is widely known, theobromine also poses a risk to cats and horses and other domestic pets. The metabolic process for cats, dogs and horses is significantly slower than it is for humans. An animals inability to quickly metabolize theobromine allows toxic levels of the chemical to buildup. Symptoms can range from diarrhea to muscle spasms and vomiting.

No antidote exists for treating theobromine poisoning and it is important to seek immediate veterinary help for any pet who has ingested chocolate. The vet can administer a variety of treatment options that can help reverse the toxic effects of theobromine. The key is to not wait until your pet starts to exhibit symptoms. Seek professional veterinary services immediately.

Since caffeine is similar to theobromine, avoid exposing your pet to sources of caffeine like coffee, tea, coffee beans and tea leaves.

Vegetables and Fruits to Avoid

In addition to chocolate, there are variety of fruit and vegetables that are potentially harmful to domestic pets. Just a few of the fruits and vegetables that your pet should avoid include onions, avocados, mushrooms, grapes and raisins. There are a number of fruit seeds that can cause toxicity problems for your pet including, but not limited to apple seeds, peach and apricot pits, cherry and avocados pits, and mustard seeds.

Fruit seeds and pits contain various levels of cyanide compounds. Though the amount of cyanide may not be fatal to your pet, the effects can be serious enough to require veterinary care. The best advice is to play it safe and avoid exposing your pets to these foods. Onions and similar foods such as leeks and scallions are not poisonous but can cause digestive problems and anemia in some animals so it is best to avoid them.

Candy is Sweet but Not for Your Pet

Sugar and candy may seem like a harmless treat for your pet. Problems can arise when the candy contains any type of artificial sweetener such as Xylitol. Some candy may contain cacao-based ingredients which can expose your pet to toxic levels of theobromine. If you choose to indulge your pet with the occasional sweet, make certain of the ingredients and do so only in moderation.

Other Foods to Avoid

Dogs love peanut butter and giving them peanuts in moderation can make for a tasty treat. While peanuts do not pose a risk for most dogs, other varieties of nuts should be avoided. Among the nut varieties that you should not give to your pet include macadamias and walnuts. If you have walnut trees on your property or walk your dog where walnut trees grow, make sure your dog does not ingest the nut meat or the shells. Either can cause moderate to severe digestive problems that may not show for a day or two.

The best rule of thumb when it comes to your pets and food is when in doubt, throw it out. Take a look around the kitchen and make sure that you pet-proof cabinets and pantries. It is much easier to prevent exposure to harmful foods than it is to see your pet suffer.

If you are ever in doubt about your pets health, seek professional veterinary help immediately.

