

Ask A Vet: Can My Dog Eat Whatever I Can?

Sunday, December 18, 2016

Dear Dr. Weldys,

My dog Coco loves to eat whatever I am eating and this includes grapes on occasion. A friend of mine told me her vet said grapes were toxic to dogs and to never allow them. Is this true?

-Curious Reader

Dear Reader,

Being the holiday season many of us are having family and friends to our homes to enjoy the festivities. This inevitably will include a variety of scrumptious foods that we will enjoy. Unfortunately, whether we are aware or not, our dogs will also enjoy many of these treats. From now through the new year, many veterinary clinics will see more than their share of gastrointestinal disturbances and other toxicities from pets ingesting foods they should not. I am going to take this opportunity to go over some human foods that may be dangerous for your pet.

Grapes/Raisins - To answer your question yes they can be very toxic to some dogs and can cause a fatal acute kidney failure. The specific toxin or reason for toxicity is not known. Raisins are considered more dangerous because they are more concentrated.

Avocados - The fruit and seeds contain persin, which can cause a severe gastrointestinal disturbance including vomiting and diarrhea.

Alcoholic Beverages -Alcohol can have the same effects in dogs that it does in humans, but it is dose dependent and may not take much to cause vomiting, weakness, or even a coma.

Macadamia Nuts - These tasty nuts can cause severe neurologic symptoms in your dog including tremors, weakness, and drunkenness. They can also cause vomiting and abdominal pain.

Chocolate - Baking and dark chocolate are much more potent than milk chocolate. The toxic ingredients are theobromine and caffeine. Symptoms can include vomiting, diarrhea, increased heart rate, panting, and seizures in severe cases. Here is a guideline on what amounts of which chocolates can cause serious problems for an average 20 lb dog.

Milk Chocolate one pound; Semi-Sweet Chocolate six ounces; Baking Chocolate two ounces.

Bones - Fish, chicken, pork, or even beef bones can potentially cause dangerous blockages if they are swallowed whole or fractured into sharp pieces.

Fat trimmings or high fat foods - These foods are especially tempting for our canine friends. However, their digestive systems are not designed for large amounts of high fat foods. The result is often a serious inflammatory disease called pancreatitis which can result in a long illness or even death. Long term diets high in fatty foods will almost certainly result in obesity and its related problems.

Onions -They contain chemicals called sulfoxides which can damage red blood cells and cause a serious anemia. Raw, cooked or powdered onions can cause illness.

This is not an all inclusive list but only the most common toxic foods. The best thing to do if you find that

your dog has eaten or been fed any of these foods is contact your veterinarian or an animal poison control center immediately. Most of these toxicities can be treated without complication if caught early. Finally, enjoy your holiday meals, but do your dog a favor and say no to those sad puppy dog eyes.

-Dr. Justin Sellon