



SAN TAN CANINE TRAINING NEWSLETTER

NATHAN BRAATEN • 602.320.2890 • By Appointment

SOME FOODS THAT ARE HARMFUL TO YOUR DOG

Americans spend over \$10 billion dollars a year on food for their pets. Despite buying the best food available, some would rather eat what we eat. However, certain foods can be dangerous to your pet, causing varying degrees of illness. Some food is toxic due to ingredients and some by improper cooking, storage or poor hygiene.

Chocolate

In addition to having a high fat content, chocolate contains caffeine and theobromine. These two compounds are nervous system stimulants and can be toxic to your dog in high amounts. The levels of caffeine and theobromine vary between different types of chocolate. For example, white chocolate has the lowest concentration of stimulants and baking chocolate or cocoa beans have the highest concentration. Depending on the type of chocolate ingested and the amount eaten, various problems can occur. The high fat content in chocolate may result in vomiting and possible diarrhea. Once toxic levels are eaten, the stimulant effect becomes apparent. You may notice restlessness, hyperactivity, muscle twitching, increased urination and possible excessive panting. Heart rate and blood pressure levels may also increase. Seizure activity may occur in severe cases.

Alcoholic Beverages

Ethanol is the component in alcoholic beverages that can be toxic when an excessive amount is ingested. Pets are much smaller than us and can be highly affected by small amounts of alcohol. Exercise caution when drinks and pets are together. Toxicity can cause a wide variety of signs and symptoms, and may result in death. Signs may include odor of alcohol on the animal's breath, staggering, behavioral changes, excitement, depression, increased urination, slowed respiratory rate or cardiac arrest and death.

Coffee (ground and beans)

Dogs that eat coffee grounds or beans can get "caffeine" toxicity. The symptoms are very similar to those of chocolate toxicity and can be just as or even more serious.

Fatty Foods

Rich and fatty foods are favorites of dogs. They often get them as treats, leftovers or from getting into the trash. These fatty foods can cause pancreatitis. Pancreatitis can affect any pet but miniature or toy poodles, cocker spaniels and miniature schnauzers are particularly prone. Signs of pancreatitis generally include an acute onset of vomiting, sometimes diarrhea and abdominal pain. Abdominal pain is often evidenced by hunched posture or "splinting" of the abdomen when picked up. The dog may become very sick quickly and often needs intensive fluid and antibiotic therapy.

Onions or Garlic

Dogs and cats lack the enzyme necessary to properly digest onions and this could result in gas, vomiting, diarrhea or severe gastrointestinal distress. If large amounts of onion or garlic are ingested or onions are a daily part of your dog's diet, the red blood cells may become fragile and break apart. This is due to the toxic ingredient in onions and garlic, thiosulphate. Signs can begin immediately after eating the onion or a few days later. Large quantities of garlic need to be ingested before signs of toxicity are seen. Severe anemia and even death can occur if the dog ingests

lots of onion or garlic and receives no treatment. All forms of onion and garlic are a problem. This includes raw, dehydrated, cooked, powders or those in foods.

Xylitol (sugar sweetener)

Xylitol is a sugar-alcohol sweetener found in sugar-free human food products such as chewing gum, candy as well as other products. Dogs that eat significant amounts can develop a sudden drop in blood sugar, which can cause weakness, lethargy, loss of coordination, collapse and seizures. Symptoms can begin in as little as 30 minutes and last hours. It is recommended that pets that experience symptoms be taken to a veterinarian or local emergency clinic for evaluation.

Grapes and Raisins

So far, about 10 dogs poisoned by grapes and raisins have been officially reported to the ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center. The amount of grapes or raisins ingested has been between 9 ounces to 2 pounds, and dogs ingesting these large amounts have developed kidney failure. Aggressive, and sometimes prolonged, treatment may be necessary to give the affected dog a chance at survival; without treatment death is possible. Despite testing, the reason for the kidney failure and the amount necessary for toxicity remains unknown. For now, any dog that ingests large amounts of grapes or raisins should be treated aggressively, so contact your veterinarian immediately if ingestion has occurred.

Making household cleaning animal-friendly

Studies have shown that exposure to toxic levels of household chemicals can also result in genetic damage and cancer.

Household cleaners can affect indoor air quality, and considering that our animals spend most of their time inside, and are closer to surfaces such as floors, rugs and upholstery, they are more susceptible to the negative impact of these substances. On average, indoor air can be up to 20 times more polluted than outdoor air, while an EPA study revealed that 900 chemicals are commonly found inside the home. Household cleaners are a major contributor to these figures.

When choosing a product, check for a list of ingredients to make sure it's as natural or non-toxic as it claims. Companies like Nature Clean offer everything from kitchen and bathroom spray cleaners to chlorine-free dishwashing liquids. Enzyme-based cleaners are another good alternative. The enzymes in these products help break down grease, soil, urine and odor-causing substances into water-soluble components. Companies such as Natural Chemistry offer a range of enzyme-based cleaners including products designed to remove stains and odors left by animals on bedding, carpets and other household surfaces.

Look at the label

1. Cleaning products sold at natural health stores are much more likely to show a list of ingredients than those sold at supermarkets. These stores are also much more likely to sale products marked "Organic" or "Environmentally-Friendly" which are often plant-based or soap-based and contain no toxic chemicals.
2. Conversely, commercial cleaning product manufacturers are not required by law to list ingredients on their labels. Instead, they must use signal words that correspond to varying degrees of toxicity or danger. Products labeled with the word "Danger", and marked with a skull and crossbones are highly toxic and should not be used or stored around animals. Products labeled with the word "Caution" are likely to pose slighter risks, but still not to be treated with care.

Making your own cleaners

All Purpose Cleaner

Mix ½ cup vinegar and ¼ cup baking soda in ½ gallon water. Store and keep. Use for removal of water deposit stains on shower stall panels, bathroom chrome fixtures, windows, bathroom mirrors, etc.

Oven Cleaner

Moisten oven surfaces with sponge and water. Sprinkle several layers of baking soda and let set for one hour. Rub gently with fine steel wool for tough spots.

It's important to recognize that any cleaner, natural or not, should be stored beyond the reach of children and animals.

Steer clear of these ingredients:

- Ammonia
- Chlorine
- Creosol
- Ethylene glycol
- Formaldehyde
- Hydrochloric acid
- Nitrobenzene
- Perchloroethylene
- Sodium hydroxide
- Sodium hypochlorite
- Trichloroethane
- Triclosan
- Turpentine
- Xylene