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Things You should never feed your Dog

By A.M. Wilmont

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Unfortunately, there are a number of household items which we tend to take for granted that are potentially very dangerous to your dog's health. It is especially important to be aware of this because as you know, dogs are essentially scavengers and will often eat just about anything they can sink their fangs into. I would say that many own dog is more like a mobile garbage disposal. It is also very important to be aware of these items since their sense of smell is so well developed that your pooch will be able to find what you may think is well hidden.

One of these dangerous household items, it turns out, is simple chocolate. While chocolate has been reported recently to be high in human-friendly antioxidants, it appears to be potentially lethal for our pets, and particularly for our dogs. Cats are mostly unaffected since they do not care for the taste of chocolate, but dogs tend to be crazy about it. Certain breeds of dogs react indifferently to chocolate. The root of the problem is that chocolate contains various chemicals which are called methylxanthine alkaloids (some types have more of these chemicals than others)

Sadly, relatively miniscule amounts of these chemicals are capable of causing such serious problems as constriction of the arteries and an increased heart rate. Large amounts may cause even more dire symptoms and a pound of milk chocolate could possibly kill a sixteen pound dog.

If you find that your dog has eaten chocolate then by all means take note of the it's type and try to estimate the amount eaten. Then get on the phone with a veterinarian or an emergency facility. Be sure that your children know how important it is to keep chocolate out of your dog's reach.

If you are not aware that your dog has consumed chocolate, the consequences could be severe. If consumption is not found within 4 to 6 hours without the right treatment, cardiac failure, seizures, coma and death could result, according to veterinarian Dr. Jane Bicks.

In addition to seemingly innocent chocolate, there are a number of other common household items that may seem safe for our dogs but that can be downright dangerous.

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Some mushrooms, for example, can produce abdominal pain, liver and kidney damage and anemia. So be aware of wild mushrooms when you are out walking your dog in wooded areas. Garlic may seem benign but can cause vomiting, liver damage, anemia and diarrhea so do not give your pet baby food since it can contain garlic.

Anti-freeze can shut down your dog's kidney and they tend to love the taste. Mistletoe can cause vomiting, abdominal pain and depression. Onions can cause liver damage, anemia and diarrhea. Onion can also sometimes be found in baby food. Cats are actually somewhat more sensitive to this one so keep out of the reach of both.

Coffee, like cocoa, is especially dangerous, and may cause heart rate increase, diarrhea, seizures, coma, death. Caffeine just does not have the same effect in dogs.

When outside be careful around apple and cherry trees. While the fruit is safe, the leaves and roots are not.

And be very careful about Moth Balls. its primary chemical naphthalene is extremely toxic to dogs and can result in tremors and seizures.

Concerning dog food, you should be looking for dyes and other chemicals, according to Dr. Jane

BHA, for instance, which is one of the main synthetic antioxidant preservatives used to prevent food

discoloration, has been observed to cause cancer in laboratory

rats at certain doses. Small doses are as yet unclear but since dog food is eaten every day caution is advised.

Many conventional dog food brands have large quantities of sodium to make them palatable, and this can be quite harmful to a dog.

Other ingredients to wary of are dairy, by-products, chemical preservatives and artificial colors. For more information go to

Aaron Wilmont is an author and researcher in the fields of human and pet health. For more info. go to

Letting Your Dog Choose His Own Food

By Ethan K. Roberts

Spend time at any pet store and the choice of dog foods to feed your dog is in abundance. How do you know which to choose and which is good for your dog? The answer to that is simply, you do not, let your dog choose. Although there are some basics that are recommended.

If you have purchased your dog from a breeder, ask the breeder what they recommend to feed your new pet. A good breeder should be able to tell you what has worked best for their dogs. This is a good place to start. However, if you have adopted your new dog, then it will be up to you to figure out what is good for your dog and what is not. The dog will certainly help you in determining the right food for him.

Always read the labels on a dog food package. What you want to look at is the first ingredient. You do

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not want to see meat meal, this can be anything within the food including road kill. Chicken Meal or Lamb Meal is a good start. You also always want to see the word meal; whole meat without the Meal is mostly water. Most nutritionists prefer chicken based dog foods as they are easier to digest.

You may see corn or a type of corn product in the dog food. Corn is a protein source the dog food makers use to keep the price reasonable. Some dogs like corn and others do not. If you see your dog start itching, licking his feet, scooting his butt, or getting frequent ear infections, this could indicate a lack of tolerance for corn. Beware of wheat in a food. Wheat tends to be more of an irritant in dogs than corn is.

You need to inspect the label for the sentence "AAFCO feeding trials confirm that (dog food brand) is complete and balanced for adult dogs or all life stages". This sentence alone will tell you that the dog food was fed to any number of dogs and was determined to meet the nutritional needs for all life stages of a dog.

When it comes to feeding your dog there are certain guidelines that should be followed depending on the age of your dog. For instance, puppies should be fed more regularly than adult dogs. Puppies should be fed as often as four times per day and with a quality dog food geared towards puppies specifically. Adult dogs should be fed twice a day.

In general, feed puppies and adult dogs separately so you can be sure the amount they are eating each time and to prevent fighting. Set a feeding schedule for your dog, but not one to where they become anxious if you happen to be late. It is a good idea to teach your dog to sit before placing the dog food in the bowl; this will prevent them from jumping to get the food.

Nutritionists suggest only allowing your dog 15 to 20 minutes to eat then removing and disposing of the remainder.

Ethan K. Roberts writes about

and other topics. Visit his other sites on

and

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